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CO-OPERATION IN LINCOLN.

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1861-1911.



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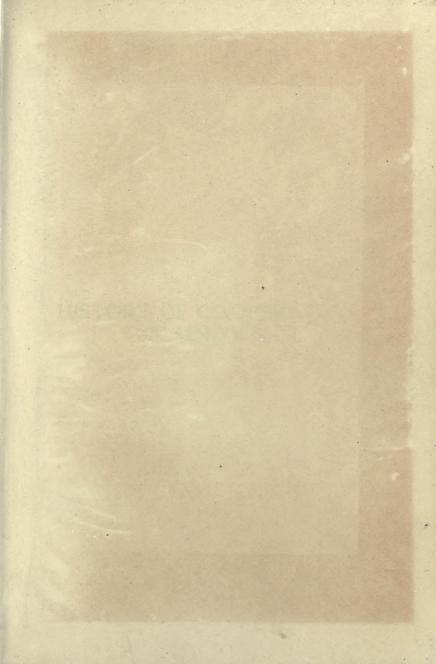
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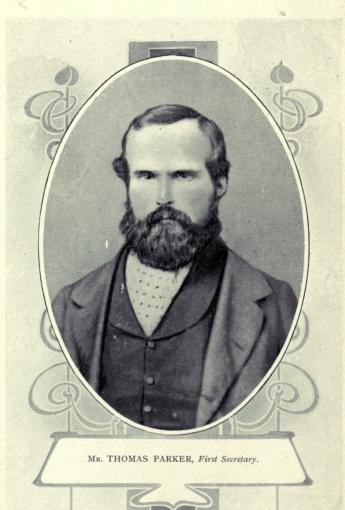
by

Professor Fay



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HISTORY OF CO-OPERATION IN LINCOLN.



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HISTORY

OF

CO-OPERATION IN LINCOLN

1861-1911

DUNCAN Mc.INNES, J.P.

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MANCHESTER:

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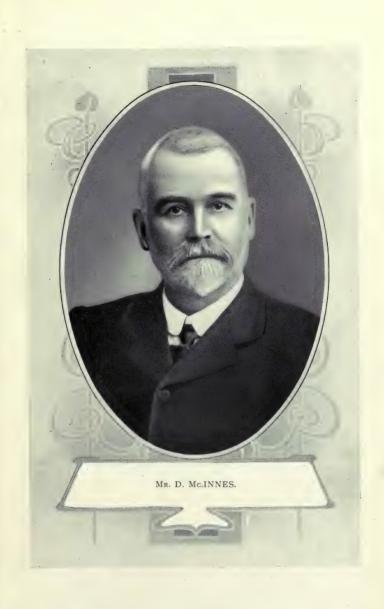
"The best way to improve society is to improve ourselves; without it political reforms are useless, with it they are almost unnecessary."—Froude.

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CHAPTER I.

Lincoln City.

THE City of Lincoln is one of the most ancient and interesting in England. At a depth of seventeen feet below the present street level unmistakable traces have been found of the inhabitants of Britain who lived in this country during the closing period of the Stone Age. Later it was a stronghold of the Celts, and was the seat of a powerful chief whose authority extended over the greater part of Lindsey, the present northern division of the county. The Romans occupied the city for four centuries: traces of them are unearthed continually when excavations are made in any of the central or upper In rugged decay, but strong and massive still, stands the Newport Arch, the northern gate, built A.D. 45, the oldest known Roman masonry yet intact in Britain. Near it are parts of the wall; and sections of the pillars which skirted the front of the municipal buildings, theatre, temple, granaries, and mint are outlined in the pavement of Bailgate, the Roman Ermine Street, across which the arch is built. The floors of these buildings lie nine feet below the present street level.

When the last of the Imperial troops had been withdrawn from the city, the Norsemen assailed it. It is not certain at what period they became its masters, but in the year 518 they were known to have been disputing with the Britons for its possession. From the time of the departure of the Romans until it became entirely Norse or Danish, Lincoln suffered much. Its splendid public buildings were demolished, and from the high standard of civilisation to which it had attained as a Roman colony it was swept back into comparative barbarism under its northern masters.

Centuries passed, of which little is known except that towards the time of the Norman Conquest Lincoln formed one of a semi-independent Danish Commonwealth embracing Leicester, Stamford, Derby, and Nottingham. These towns were each governed by their own lawmen and helped each other in time of need. It was a boast of Lincoln that it had "never been governed by any one man, whether king or earl, warrior or churchman." William the Conqueror did not attempt to interfere with the government of the city, but his fears led him to build a castle, the site for which he purchased at a fair price, and in the castle he placed a garrison of soldiers to check any possible outbreak of the inhabitants.

Domesday Book states that the city contained 1,070 houses and mansions and goo burgesses. The building of the cathedral was begun in 1080 by Remigius, a Norman monk of Fescamp, who had furnished the Conqueror with a ship and twenty armed men on condition that he should be given an English See. nucleus of what is now the trading and manufacturing part of Lincoln was built by a Lincoln Dane, named Colswegen, early in the eleventh century, to provide a home for his tenants, whose houses had been pulled down to make room for the castle and cathedral. Onehundred-and-fifty-six houses were demolished on the site of the castle and its outworks. This low-lying suburb of ancient Lincoln, built by Colswegen, bore the name of Wigford, and, according to an ancient prophecy, it boded ill for any king to pass crowned into, or to wear a crown in Lincoln, so in royal pageants the kingly circlet was doffed by its wearer while he was yet in Wigford, outside the ancient southern gate of the city.

Although generally believed, it seems, nevertheless, by no means certain that Lincoln was unrepresented in Parliament previous to the year 1265. Many authorities affirm that the laws of William the Conqueror were sanctioned by a Parliament, which, in addition to the nobles, comprised representatives from the cities and counties of the kingdom, whereas the Parliament called together

in 1265, and which met the nobles in London on January 20th, 1266, was that in which the whole of the boroughs in the kingdom were for the first time represented. As a borough. Lincoln has as high claims to antiquity as any in England, and its Corporation, though not in its present form, is older than most others. Until 1314 the city had no mayor, its principal governor being a portreeve. That office and name had been retained from Saxon times when the portreeve's business was to guard the gates of cities and fenced towns. In 1316 Edward II., when about to undertake a war against Scotland, held a Parliament in Lincoln, to which city, probably to facilitate the granting of supplies, he had two years previously accorded the privilege of being governed by a mayor. The Parliament decreed that each village and hamlet in the kingdom should provide the king one soldier and provisions for him for sixty days. In 1352 the city was granted a chartered market for wool, leather, and lead; and in 1386 the mayor and his successors were allowed by Richard II. to have a sword carried before them in their processions. During the eleventh, twelfth, and part of the thirteenth centuries and onward, "Lincoln was one of the greatest trading towns in England, rich with the commerce of foreign lands, the resort of traders both by land and sea." A mark of its opulence, importance, and devotion to religion was its fifty-two churches. Many of these disappeared long ago, and a number of the old parishes, with their mere pittances of income, existing in the reign of Mary, were added together to form the present parochial divisions of the city.

In 1533, an Act of Parliament having been passed to enforce the reading of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments in English, the inhabitants of Lincoln, joining with those of other towns and villages of this part of the country to the number of 20,000 persons, rose in rebellion against this innovation, resolved not to pray or rehearse their belief in their mother tongue. Hearing that Henry VIII. was preparing in person to take the field against them with a powerful

force, they drew up a memorial and sent it to him, informing him of their disinclination to repeat their prayers in English, and of several other grievances, and craving his clemency for having risen in rebellion. The king "graciously allowed them" to adhere to Latin, on condition that they disbanded, laid down their arms, and paid him a heavy amount of money. These terms were accepted, and the portion of the indemnity that the citizens of Lincoln had to pay was £40.* Seven years later, owing to this ornament of English history having experienced "an honest change of opinion" as regarded his religion, he appropriated from Lincoln Cathedral 2,621 ounces of gold, 4,285 ounces of silver, and an immense number of rubies, pearls, sapphires, diamonds, and jewelled ornaments, gifts of the pious of preceding ages at the shrines of St. Hugh and the Virgin Mary. The former of these shrines occupied a space of eight feet by four, and was covered with plates of beaten gold. In the stone payement, near to the masonry on which the latter shrine stood, may still be seen a hollow place worn out by the feet of countless pilgrims, who, century after century, here prostrated in adoration as they presented their offerings. Within a few years after Henry's spoliation, a bishop, in his zeal for reformation, stripped the cathedral of all the treasures that the king had left, and defaced or destroyed most of the statues, shrines, and altars. Whatever consecrated vessels or plate he left untouched were carried away in 1645 by the Puritan soldiers, who also wrenched off all the monumental brasses from the tombs. They used this metal to make cannons, and stripped the leaden roofs from many of the city churches for bullets. The cathedral was only saved from demolition through the advocacy with Cromwell of a Puritan mayor, named Original Peart, who was also a member of Parliament for the city. He represented to the Protector that the downfall of the cathedral would be a death blow to the prosperity of the city. During the Commonwealth three of the aldermen were turned out of

^{*} About £460 at the present value of money.



Standing: F. Stephenson (Cashier), G. Bacon, W. H. Goldstein, H. Bell, W. Hewson, G. Harley, G. Ward. Sitting: W. B. Howard, W. Coulson (Treasurer), C. Ostick (President), G. Harris (Secretary), M. Smaller.



office for bearing commissions in the army of the king, and at the king's restoration seven aldermen, two sheriffs, the town clerk, and several of the council were displaced by Charles II. for having favoured the Parliamentarians, so that on whichever side they served the consequences appeared to be the same. For two centuries after this time Lincoln declined in importance and population, and its history is entirely uneventful.

Periodical bull-baitings, and the numerous executions that followed the assizes, afforded congenial excitement for the barbarous tastes of the citizens during this leaden age. The bulls were loosed on Danes Terrace, pursued, goaded, yelped at by dogs, and hustled by crowds of men and boys down Danesgate into Broadgate, and tortured and maddened, sometimes for hours, before they were despatched.

In 1722 and 1747 two women were burned at the stake for the murder of their husbands, and so recently as 1785 nine men were hanged at one time for highway robbery and sheep and horse stealing. These executions took place on the old gallows, at a spot on the north-western corner of the castle, known as Hangman's Ditch. The last time this gallows was used was in 1814, when a man was hanged for breaking into a shop.

During the period from the end of the Commonwealth up to 1741 Lincoln, notwithstanding its natural advantages, sank into complete insignificance. The Fossdyke Canal, the trade on which had formerly been the chief support of the city, was nearly choked up. The Corporation of that day, to whom it, together with the foreshores of Brayford and the swamps extending to Skellingthorpe, belonged, were too idle and too much lacking in public spirit and enterprise to make this canal, the most ancient in England, again navigable. They therefore parted with their rights over it by leasing the navigation to Mr. Ellison, of Thorne, in Yorkshire. By this lease he acquired an exclusive right to the canal for 999 years. In four years from 1741, when the lease was granted, he had cleared the waterway and opened

communication from Lincoln to the Trent, and the price of coals in Lincoln at once fell from 21s. per chaldron to 13s., so soon did the inhabitants feel the benefit of Mr. Ellison's speculation. Until the advent of railways in 1835 the traffic upon the canal continued to increase, and, while it afforded a mine of wealth to the lessee, it rendered incalculable benefit to the commercial part of the city. This canal is now the property of the G.N.R. Company.

In 1762 the Witham Drainage Act was passed for draining, reclaiming, and preserving the fens, and for restoring and maintaining the navigation of the river from the High Bridge, Lincoln, to Boston; and in 1792 another Act was obtained for making the navigation complete between the River Witham and the Fossdyke Canal, through the High Bridge. Through the operation of these Acts the tolls were tripled in amount in twenty years, and upwards of 100,000 acres of excellent land was brought into cultivation. The aggregate value of the district embraced was increased by £2,000,000, the expense of draining, enclosing, and other work was £400,000, and the net profit which accrued to the commissioner-landowners who were the promoters was £1,600,000. It is worthy of notice that no person could be a drainage commissioner unless he possessed lands to the value of froo yearly, or a clear estate of the value of \$2,000, and that the commissioners were given the power to raise taxes in each district, of which a part was to be enclosed, but they took care that all land enclosed should be free from tithes.

From the earliest ages to which history or tradition reaches Lincoln has owed whatever trade importance it has possessed to being a central market for hides, wool, and grain. Its anciently instituted annual fairs for horses and sheep, although yearly dwindling, are still among the largest in Great Britain; but the extensive heaths, moors, fens, and commons of the county, which first encouraged the breeding of these animals, are now for the most part enclosed cultivated fields, bearing cereals and roots.





CHAPTER II.

Early Organisations in Lincoln.

GUILDS are known to have existed in the city from very early times. Their formation in England was encouraged by Alfred the Great, his son Edward, and his grandson, Athelstan, who died in 940. They were known as "frithgild," which may be translated "peace club." Men joined with their neighbours in working for certain objects that concerned the public good. Every member of them swore to help his associates in all cases of need; they were leagues against violence and fraud—benefit clubs and burial clubs.

The cordwainers were the only trade guild in Lincoln which was incorporated by Royal Charter, all the other mercantile confraternities having been established simply by license under the common seal of the city. The cordwainers were formed into a corporation twenty years before the cordwainers of London, and the weavers, formed at the same period, namely, in 1389, were the first company of linen weavers in this country. The company was composed of natives of Brabant, who had been driven from their homes by persecution.

Several guild halls still exist, some in ruins and some broken up into dwellings and warehouses. The hall of the most important of these guilds dates from 1150, and is now erroneously known as "John o' Gaunt's stables."

From 1516 and onward efforts were made by the Corporation to induce cloth workers and dyers to settle again in the city. They were given the use of an old church and churchyard, and were made freemen; but after a trial of forty years the attempt to introduce cloth making was at last abandoned. The same result befell an attempt made later to introduce the manufacture of hosiery.

In 1785 a "Society for the Promotion of Industry" attempted the manufacture of woollen stuff for ladies' dresses, and for this purpose erected in High Street a building still known as "the old factory." The ladies of the county agreed to wear the products of this factory yearly at the annual "Stuff Ball," and the colour of the material was to be changed every year, according to the choice of the lady patroness. Little by little, however, the manufacture died away, as all other attempts to reintroduce the making of textile fabrics into Lincoln had invariably done, although the "Stuff Ball" still continues to be held annually.

Up to sixty years ago Lincoln remained a stagnant little town of about 8,000 inhabitants. Except for its annual fairs, its small weekly markets, and the county assizes, there was little business of any kind stirring within it. All this, however, has been changed, and the progress of the old city during late years has been continuous. The making of portable steam engines, threshing and other machinery for agricultural purposes created a business which has been extended to the manufacture of pumping, excavating, and mining machinery, besides steam engines and boilers of every description, placing Lincoln in the front rank of engineering towns. The city, exclusive of two recently built suburbs of Bracebridge and New Boultham, has a population of 50,000, and fully two-thirds are dependent directly or indirectly upon the engineering industry for their livelihood.

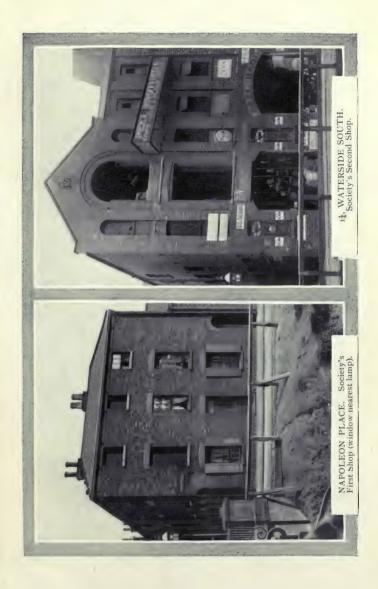
While Lincoln was slowly changing from a quiet assize town into a busy manufacturing centre, skilled handicraftsmen were constantly coming in from places where Co-operative Societies were established. While these undoubtedly quickened the growth of the movement, it is questionable whether Co-operation does not in old towns like Lincoln owe its trend in as great a degree to influences from within, which may be termed communal heredity, as to those applied from the outside. Present-day surroundings in Lincoln hide but do not obliterate evidences of the conditions under which industry was

conducted and flourished in mediæval and earlier times. And there is evidence of the existence, even at the Conquest, of that kind of spirit out of which the Co-operative movement everywhere has sprung; for, when the Conqueror reached the city, the spokesman of the freemen's twelve elected law-men sought occasion to inform him, as has been stated previously, that the town was "self governing," and had "never been subject to any one man, be he king or earl, warrior or churchman." William left them in possession of their "liberties" and their "common property," and the present freemen still possess the bulk of that property, which speaks well for their tenacity of purpose and continuity of policy.

The associative spirit of long ago left its traces in the shape of trade guild halls, now nearly hidden by meaner buildings, just as seaweed and barnacles fasten upon and in time make formless the fair proportions of some shapely derelict hulk of sound old heart of oak. guilds of craftsmen, those forerunners of trade unions and Co-operative and Friendly Societies, were dissolved by Act of Parliament at the close of the Reformation. because some of their rules were, as was the fashion of that age, mixed up with religious observances. Their property, acquired by the careful management of many generations. and providing the Guildsmen with old-age, sick, funeral, and other allowances, was confiscated, but the remains of their halls that still exist are evidences in as great a degree of the important position these organisations held in the industrial life of bygone days, as are the Co-operative Stores, hall, library, and reading-room of the Lincoln Society in that of to-day. Property may be confiscated. but ideas cannot be extinguished by Act of Parliament. The old trade organisations were dissolved, and their buildings passed into other hands, but the associative idea of which they were the embodiment took new shapes. Some of these, although they may appear trivial to us. were considered sufficiently important at the time to be submitted to the "city fathers" for consideration. And in justice to the ancient Corporation it may be stated that

all proposals of this character appear from the records to have received as careful attention as was given, for instance, to the arrangements for cock-fighting and horse-racing for the diversion of James I. on his progress through the city from Scotland to the Metropolis, or to the provision of "fat eels, tench, and pike" for the assize judges on their visits. As has been already stated, many futile attempts were made by the Corporation to re-establish some of the textile trades that had been ruthlessly extinguished. The first communal success achieved eventually was a municipal brewery for "good ale," which long served its purpose well, disappearing when beer, as the only beverage at meals, was displaced by tea and coffee.







CHAPTER III.

To-operation in the Midlands, and the Establishment of the Lincoln Society.

TT is generally thought that Rochdale folk were the pioneers of Co-operation, but that is not so. Their Society was simply one of the first to adopt the plan of paying dividend on the members' purchases, and Mr. G. Jacob Holyoake, using his brilliant pen as their historian. endowed them with fame which was not solely theirs. Co-operators in the Midland Counties do not accept Rochdale as the Mecca of dividend-on-purchases-Cooperation, for, under their eyes, in Coventry, is Lockhurst Lane, a dividend-giving Society, established as such twelve years before that at Rochdale began, and still prospering—hoary, but with no signs of senile decay. was Rochdale's good fortune to have in Mr. Holyoake an eloquent historian, while the Lockhurst Lane and Stoney Stanton Societies,* conducting their business almost at his doorstep in his boyhood, escaped Holyoake's attention, and have remained unknown to fame beyond the Midlands.

In most of the older Co-operative Societies which preceded Lockhurst Lane and Rochdale, goods were sold at less than current retail prices, and dividend, when paid at all, was paid on capital. Some dealt in bread only, some in coal; some were corn millers and some were general traders. A good idea is obtained of the condition of the working classes in large towns at the close of the eighteenth century by noticing the reasons given for starting the "Hull Anti-Mill Industrial Corn Mill

^{*} Stoney Stanton Society is now amalgamated with Coventry Society.

Society." In a petition to the Corporation of the borough asking for assistance they were stated in the following terms by their promoters:—

We, the poor inhabitants, have lately experienced much trouble and sorrow in ourselves and families on occasion of the exorbitant price of flour, and we judge it needful to take every precaution to protect ourselves from the invasions of covetous and merciless men in the future.

In the light of the general tendency of modern legislation, it is worth noting that II5 years ago the poor in their distress appealed first for communal help. The Hull Corporation gave them much sympathy, but no official assistance. During the year I795 £350 was publicly subscribed, and with this sum, and a subscription of 6s. 6d. each from I,435 members, the mill was established, and its success was an incentive to the promotion of similar mills in other towns.

Dating from about this period a water mill was built and worked for the benefit of the poorer classes by the Corporation of Louth, but it has long been in private At Stamford a Co-operative mill was started, and Co-operation in Lincoln began also with the establishment of a corn mill at some time during the closing years of the era of canal navigation preceding the opening of railways. The inspiration came from Hull, where the Co-operative mill had become a standing object-lesson to the surrounding district of the power of association. Intercourse between Hull and Lincoln by way of the Fossdyke and Trent was constant, and the traffic was great. The old Co-operative mill is still standing at the end of Princess Street, by the side of the Upper Witham, at a part still navigable for barges, but rarely used. It drifted into private hands during the youth of some of the founders of the Lincoln Co-operative Society; but, although its fabric and machinery passed away from the working class, the idea of associative trading, of which they were the tangible outgrowth and embodiment, lingered on until at length a venture in another form was embarked upon. The old mill had been brought into

difficulties by loose management and dishonesty; against those who were responsible for its failure there was then practically no remedy in law. By the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, passed in 1852, this condition of things was altered, and the obstacles which had hindered working men from embarking collectively in industrial undertakings were removed. At this period Temperance Societies were being formed. The Lincoln Temperance Society began its work in 1847, and the establishment of the Co-operative Society in 1861 was due to the Secretary of it, Mr. Thos. Parker, a joiner by trade, a native of Gainsborough, who lived in Melville Street. Lincoln. At meetings of the Temperance Society discussion was frequent as to whether something supplementary to the practice of teetotalism was not necessary to provide an object of interest for working men apart from their daily round of labour. In Co-operation Mr. Parker saw what he thought was the surest means of bettering the condition of himself and his workfellows. The course of social evolution since he passed away to an early grave has proved the keenness of his insight and the soundness of his judgment. To dream away his life in wishes and aspirations was no part of his disposition. To back up thought, by prompt and decisive action was the very essence of his nature. He was an enthusiast, but not one of the mercurial or inconstant type. possessed creative as sell as administrative capacity, and while his enthusiasm was electric and contagious, his honesty of purpose was transparent. He made himself acquainted with the progress of Co-operative trading at Hull and Rochdale by correspondence and perusal of rules of the Hull Anti-Mill and the Rochdale Pioneers' Society, convened a meeting, explained the principles on which Co-operative Societies were based, set forth their objects, and showed what they had accomplished in a fashion so convincing that a Provisional Committee was elected, a small capital was subscribed, and the Society began business in a humble way at No. 1, Napoleon Place, on July 17th, 1861. The Provisional Committee spent much time in discussing whether the Society should be

called the Equitable or the Industrial, and because they could not agree to accept either in preference to the other they adopted both, hence the Society's rather cumbrous title* First Committee:—President, Mr. Thomas Jackson; Treasurer, Mr. John Harrison; Secretary, Mr. Josiah Simpson; Committee, Messrs. H. Taylor, T. Mc. Turk, H. Richardson, W. Godson, and J. Pacey; Auditors, Messrs. H. Millson and W. Lamb; Trustees, Messrs. J. Whitworth, T. Parker, and H. Beaumont. Few of the founders of the Society or their immediate successors are now living. Mr. Parker died of consumption in 1863, when he was between thirty and forty years of age. At the beginning of the Society the Committee carried out goods from the Stores at nights and on Saturday afternoons to the houses of members, who were unable or unwilling to take home their own purchases. Afterwards one boy was engaged, then two, and then a young man with a handcart, until increase of trade justified the use of a pony and cart, so that delivery of goods has always been a practice in this Society. In the rules provision is made that the Society shall sell goods wholesale and retail, and a curious light is thrown upon the method of doing business by a minute passed in 1863, setting forth that in future "Members purchasing goods at wholesale prices shall either have all or none at such rates." Another minute directs, "That the Secretary's wife shall in future buy 20lb. of good butter every week, instead of 15½lbs.," the qualifying word implying that at that time, as now, bad butter was on sale in Lincoln Butter Market. In 1863 a long discussion as to whether the dividend should be od. or q_0^2 d. in the f occupied the time of one of the General Meetings. The year before, with larger sales, only $1\frac{1}{2}d$. in the f could be paid. majority decided upon od., and in the fulness of their hearts adopted the cheap conventional plan of relieving their feelings by a resolution, "That the best thanks of the members be given to the Committee and officers for their valuable services." The employés were likewise

^{*} The Lincoln Equitable Co-operative Industrial Society Limited.



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thanked for their "kindness and attention to the members." More tangible, however, was a resolution of the next Quarterly Meeting, which gave the employés half a days' holiday each week, and the Committee their teas free at the Society's festivals. Next year, as the dividend was id, in the f less and the quarterly sales were £60 less, a large proportion of the Committee were set aside for "new blood," some of whom it appears from what follows were very zealous and sanguine, as is frequently the case with newly elected Committee-men. Prefacing the next balance sheet and statement of accounts was an address exhorting the members to "have faith in the lovely principle of Co-operation;" to "cast their mountains of woe into the sea of oblivion." and "free themselves from the carking cares that chain millions to a merely animal existence." After this rhetorical outburst some of the more practical members of the Committee seem, judging from the change of style, to have been allowed to express themselves, which they did in capital letters, as follows:-" Men of Lincoln, Co-operate;" "Goods sold for cash only," and so on, in the usual severely practical way. But neither poetic flights nor bald prose increased the sales. The next quarterly address was in consequence caustic and querulous. It was supplemented by an ably written leaflet and an extra penny of dividend, but still the receipts remained low. An era of fierce competition by shopkeepers had set in. The louder Co-operative trumpet blasts were blown the lower prices were cut, and many members, whose attachment to Co-operation was only skin deep, drifted away or became disheartened.

Going back to the end of the first quarter, which terminated December 17th, 1861, we notice that the receipts amounted to £518. os. 11d.; the Society's assets were £157. 8s. 10d., and the amount of profit realised on the quarter's working enabled a dividend of 9d. in the £ to be paid. The fixed stock was depreciated to the extent of £1. 4s. $10\frac{1}{2}$ d., while the amount of interest for paid-up shares was 15s. 3d. After a year's business the quarterly

turnover had increased to £550. 2s. 7d. on December 16th, 1862, but the dividend had gone down to 1½d. in the £, the cause assigned being the dishonesty of a storekeeper, of whose dismissal from the Society's service Mr. Thomas Parker gives the following account in a letter to a friend (Mr. W. Godson), who had been one of the founders of the Society, but had removed from Lincoln:—

We have had a nice bit of bother with our salesman at the Stores, who came from Nottingham with first-class testimonials, but he never told our Committee anything about his antecedents during eight months' service at Ruddington Co-operative Store. You can imagine sufficient when I tell you that I found upon going to Ruddington that during their last quarter's operations with him they did business to the amount of £513, but had no profits, and were £32 less in stock than the capital invested. This, I can assure you, rather alarmed my sensitive nerves; and, as we suspected he had intercepted letters that were sent to our Secretary from Ruddington, I set a trap for the poor fellow by posting a letter at Ruddington, and I saw the postman next morning at Lincoln with the identical letter and six others. The six came to hand, but not the trap letter, so we just took it into our heads to shift our man, traps and all; so you will perceive that we have been very busy. We have just got another man from Leicester, who appears to be one of the right sort, and I hope he will give satisfaction.

In the June following, from the balance sheet then issued, it appears that the sales had decreased to £488. 9s. 10d., but the dividend paid was 8d. in the £.

The first festival was held on Tuesday, November 28th, 1865; the tea tickets were sold at 9d. each, and the tea was served at six p.m. Mr. Pitman (Manchester) was the speaker; and at the next year's festival Mr. Farn (Eccles), another well-known Co-operative advocate, occupied that position, followed on the next occasion by Mr. D. P. Foxwell (London). All along there had been frequent changes in the management, but no great progress was made until the then Secretary (Mr. T. Jackson), who had earned the confidence and esteem of the members, was appointed Manager in 1865, and the Store was shifted to Waterside South. From that time forward the reports are couched in more hopeful terms. Steady growth for eight years, with an average dividend of 1s. 3d. in the

face of severe competition, brought the trade receipts up to £29,594 per annum; the capital was £7,992, the reserve fund £106, and the membership numbered 1,439.

In 1872 it began to be difficult to conduct the business within the narrow limits of the premises on Waterside South. The members were, therefore, requested to send in their orders and have their goods delivered during the week, to be paid for on Saturday. Thus arose the custom of giving weekly credit. All efforts to cope with the growing trade in this way by an increasing and extended van system were useless, and yet the Committee, knowing the temperament of the members, hesitated, fearing to remove into larger premises. When the flowing tide of trade could be confined no longer it was determined to purchase a site which was offered in Silver Street, and to build premises sufficiently large to accommodate the business for many years to come.



CHAPTER IV.

From Waterside South to Silver Street.

THE following extracts from the minutes passed by the Society during the time the negotiations for the purchase of the site of the Central Stores were in progress, and afterwards, disclose the significant fact that the acquirement of a large slice of property in the centre of the city was accomplished when the Society had capital only barely sufficient for its trading requirements, and that, but for the confidence and good feeling of the Cooperative Wholesale Society's Directors, the laudable project of securing a valuable site and building Central Stores in a convenient position for business would have been strangled at the outset.

On May 6th, 1872, it was resolved that Palfrey House property, Silver Street, be purchased for a site for Central Stores.

On May 7th, 1872, 10 per cent of the purchase money was paid; amount, £350.

On October 2nd, 1872, plans were passed by the members for a three-storey building, and a resolution was carried that the raising of sufficient capital to build it should be left to the Committee. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining capital, differences of opinion prevailed as to whether the plans should be carried out in their entirety or not, but eventually it was agreed to proceed if money could be obtained from the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and on May 13th, 1873, Messrs. G. Hartley and T. Jackson were deputed to wait upon the C.W.S. Directors in Manchester with a view of securing a loan.

On May 20th, 1873, the C.W.S. consented to lend £3,000 on mortgage upon the new Stores about to be built, on condition that the title deeds of the whole of the property were deposited with them.

On June 3rd, 1873, Mr. Brogden, the tenant of the old house, not being able to give up possession until April 6th, 1874, offered to lend the Society £1,500 at 5 per cent if they would allow him to remain in, on his being given as security a first charge upon that part of the site which he was occupying. A document sanctioning this proposal was drawn up and agreed to by all the parties concerned, and Mr. Brogden retained possession, paying rent, but the Society took from him on loan only £1,000 of the amount offered.

On August 4th, 1873, the building of the Central Stores had proceeded so far that a roof-raising supper was sanctioned.

On September 9th, 1873, at the Society's earnest request, the C.W.S. advanced a further sum of £1,000, at 5 per cent, on the security of a promissory note.

On August 11th, 1874, the value of the land disposed of to the Corporation for the widening of Silver Street and for rounding off the corner of Free School Lane was settled by arbitrators at £465, and, in consideration of this sum being accepted by the Society, the Corporation transferred to it the portion of the ancient road that skirted the Palfrey House property from Bank Street to Free School Lane. The cost to the Corporation of the land given up to widen the street by the Society worked out at £2. Ios. per square yard. Part of the site fronting Silver Street was sold by the Committee to Mr. Akrill, for a printing works, at a profit of £1 per yard, and part afterwards, for a Dispensary, at a profit of 34s. per yard; plots which would have been of great value to the Society ten years afterwards had they been retained.

Partly owing to the new Stores being so much larger at first than the business of the Society then needed, thereby entailing a heavy charge for interest on capital sunk in buildings, and partly owing to unfounded reports spread by enemies of Co-operation that the Society was insolvent, an unreasoning want of confidence seized a large number of the most unintelligent of the members, causing a run upon the withdrawable capital which was very difficult to meet. But an increase by the C.W.S. of their loans up to £5,000 enabled the Committee to buy stock and to satisfy every demand, and gradually to bring the Society up to the commanding financial position it has long occupied. For several years, however, after the period referred to, great difficulty was experienced in managing the Society owing to scarcity of capital. the warehouses of the new Stores heavy drapery goods and boots lay piled on the floors, covered with coarse wrappers and brown paper, because fixtures could not be afforded. There was reckless buying, also, through imperfect control of the buyers by the Committee. One General Manager, in absolute defiance of the Committee. nearly filled the cellars with cheese and tea, and was discharged in consequence. His successor applied the same principle in buying to currants and dried fruit, and thereupon was suspended. Among the membership a Manager's party and a Committee's party played an eternal game of see-saw, until eventually the Committee's party outnumbered and outweighed the adherents of the Then the position of General Manager was The keeping of accounts was made a separate abolished. department under a cashier. The Sub-Committee principle, with departmental managers, was adopted, and the change has been followed by an era of unbroken prosperity. To get rid of the immense stock of recklessly bought tea occupied several years. The cheese took a shorter period for its disposal; but how to deal with the dried fruit was for a long while a problem. Eventually a commission agent, a friend of one of the Committee, undertook to sell the old fruit on commission for what it would make. He had it removed to a neighbouring town, where it was cleaned and dressed, and the bulk of it was afterwards disposed of by him in Lincoln, providing a few of the cutting grocers with a "leading line" of fruit, some of which was bought by members of the Society, who



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blamed the Committee for not being able to sell fruit so good and cheap at the Stores. Such are the vagaries of which the human mind is capable! The members of the Committee, however, who knew the source whence the cheap fruit had come, kept their own counsel, and neither the shopkeepers who sold the fruit nor the Co-operators who bought it ever dreamed that their cheap bargains were old Co-operative stock, not considered good enough to be sold at the Stores. An attempt made a few years later in a similar way with obsolete drapery stock that had accumulated under an indifferent Manager did not answer quite so well financially, although it made a salutary clearance.

At the time when the loan of £5,000 granted by the Co-operative Wholesale Society was repaid, the reserve fund was but £210. Up to July 9th, 1884, only £2,056 had been written off the Central buildings and land, which had cost £11,402; and other property at various Branches. which stood at a total of £9,832, had not been depreciated a halfpenny. A General Meeting was therefore convened by the Committee, at which a paper was read by the present writer advocating a policy of financial consolidation at the sacrifice of a portion of the dividend. This course commended itself to the members, and it has been pursued with consistency ever since. The total amount written off land and buildings now stands at £32,803. while the reserve fund has reached £9,002, and is invested in easily realisable guaranteed securities, such as Corporation stock and debentures.

Shortly after the Society had become established in Silver Street a desire was expressed by a section of the members to commence a Building Department, and a small Committee was appointed to collect information. Particulars respecting the working of Building Societies were obtained from Mr. Henry Whiley (Manchester), and a report was presented to the next members' meeting, which decided not to entertain the proposed departure, the reason being that the Society had scarcely capital enough to work its existing businesses. As at this period

the city was growing rapidly, those members who had been in favour of the project felt free to establish another Society, which was registered on May 18th, 1872. as a Permanent Building Society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1867. The Society's chief objects, as set forth by its promoters, were to provide a sound investment for capital, to grant advances to members on security of real property, and to erect dwelling-houses and other buildings. The business then begun has been pursued successfully, with few drawbacks, up to the present time, and the Lincoln Land and Building Society, which is also a member of the Co-operative Society, is as prosperous in its way as the parent Society.

A few years later another Co-operative venture was undertaken by some members of the Co-operative Society. A small cartwrighting workshop was established, which speedily ended in failure. One of its special creations, in the shape of a lurry built for the Co-operative Society, for many years exercised the souls and tried the patience of the Committee, because of its heavy "going qualities" and its unique design.



CHAPTER V.

Establishment of Branches.

THE Society's first Branch Store was opened at Brace-bridge on May 26th, 1876, and the trade receipts for the first quarter amounted to £184. Reckoning Bracebridge as one, the Society has now ten large Branch Stores in Lincoln, doing a total trade yearly of over £112,000. The first country village Branch was opened, at the solicitation of a number of working men, at Welbourn, a village thirteen miles from Lincoln, on May 2nd, 1878. Here the sales for the first quarter amounted to £499. There are now ten of these Branches, with a total trade yearly of over £85,000.

The establishment of Branches in distant villages, where the population is sparse and much scattered, and where agriculture is practically the only industry, has been looked upon with varied, but mainly favourable feelings, by the Lincoln members, as may be judged by the progress made in this direction. It is manifest that these methods of extending Co-operative trading, although they may possibly be applicable anywhere, can only be applied if a desire to apply them exists or can be created among town Co-operators, and a desire to adopt them is shown by the surrounding agricultural population. In Lincolnshire, among the agricultural class, two kinds of Co-operative propaganda have been tried. The first failed; the second, introduced by Lincoln Society, has succeeded well, but its progress for many years was slow. "Labourers' League" movement of forty-five years ago was the first effort, and it became for a few years very powerful in the county among cottagers and agricultural day-wage workers. It was a curious compound of trade

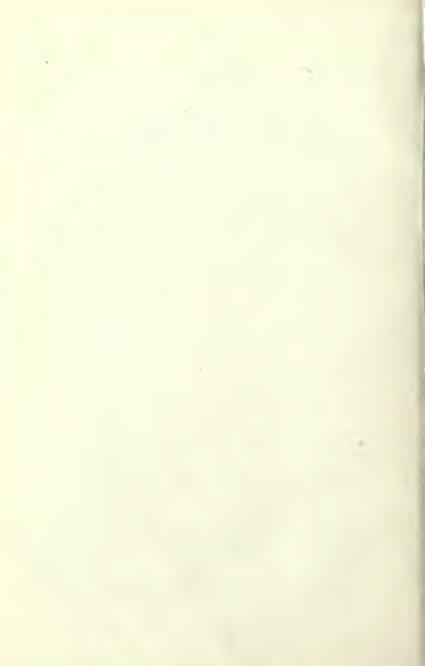
unionism and Co-operation, distributive and productive. The labourers were led by the promoters to believe that the establishment of a Co-operative Store must follow the opening of a branch of the League, and that from subscriptions and from profits of trading the outgrowth would speedily be farms worked Co-operatively all over the agricultural counties. Although no such gourd-like growth was possible, perferved pioneers went from village to village preaching it as gospel, establishing branches of the League, opening Co-operative Stores, renting or buying land. Some of the Stores were registered; some, while doing a large business, never got so far as that. In one of the latter the savings of a lifetime of hard toil were invested by a number of poor thrifty men; dividends were declared, although practically no accounts were kept; the Treasurer, a League official, took in contributions to shares and paid out withdrawals from his trousers' pockets wherever he chanced to be when a member applied to him. This patriarchal procedure was varied by another of the officials, an office-bearer also of the League, taking an occasional trip to Canada in charge of a party of emigrating labourers, and pocketing a commission on them, from persons interested, on the other side of the water. One of these Stores, while drifting steadily to ruin from similar lack of management, established branches in four distant villages, placing each in charge of incompetent men—farm labourers, collectors for the League. Of the extravagant household management of these storekeepers it was said in the villages that their "bread was eaten buttered on both sides, and ham and eggs was always frying on the fire." Confidence began to be shaken, and ruin speedily followed. The Stores failed, the members lost every penny of their capital, the branches of the League were closed, and its agents and collectors were discredited. The predicted labour millenium proved but a mirage in an industrial desert, and, while a whole countryside was strewn with the wrecks of Co-operative Societies, the bits of land fell either into the hands of the most astute of the collectors. or were disposed of to the highest bidders. Knowledge











of these consequences of misplaced confidence in misguided enthusiasts, while it chilled the desire to establish independent Co-operative Societies in purely agricultural districts, undoubtedly paved the way for the introduction of Co-operative trading in another form and by other hands.

The main reasons for the slower progress of the Cooperative movement in agricultural districts than in towns are to be found in the different conditions of life. mind of the agricultural worker is slower in its working than that of the town worker: he is secretive and watchful and has not in as great a degree as the townsman the faculty of language for unburdening and diffusing his thoughts, nor has he so many facilities for meeting and intercourse with fellow-workers. The nature of his work and his method of living tend to make him an individualist to the marrow, with less disposition than any class to work for the common welfare while working for his own. Varying with the seasons, his labours often extend from sunrise till gloaming. If he breed and raise stock, even in a small way, as well as till land, few hours are ever wholly his own. He fears and is always on guard against danger in parturitions imminent among his animals, that may cause their loss or the loss of their progeny. Daily he is haunted by care for his crops. A single storm may mean the loss of a season's work, or murrain may decimate his stock. He is rarely or never altogether free from work or free from care. And in his household, the meals taken in common with his family, the common pursuit, the selfcontained home, the bond of kinship are salient factors which must also be taken into account. Artisans, factory hands, miners, and others working fixed hours are at liberty to take up the committee and other administrative work of a Co-operative or Friendly Society in the evenings, and are able even to be absent from their employment on odd days. But it is not so easy for such agricultural workers as small farmers, cottagers, and day labourers to leave their work; and, moreover, they are actuated less by sentiment than any class. In introducing Co-operation to them one has to contend not only with the

sluggishness of ignorance and the apathy of despair, but with the suspicion of being actuated by a desire to overreach them, in order to obtain some object that does not appear on the surface; while from their ranks, be it always remembered, the young and buoyant life is constantly flowing away to the colonies or into the towns, leaving behind only the middle-aged and the old. Among this class Lincoln Society was, to its great credit, the first to take up propaganda work and to make it thoroughly successful.

The initiatory course taken in establishing a village Branch is as follows:—When a desire for information about Co-operation is manifested in any country place, on a communication being made to the Society, a public meeting is held and members are enrolled, provided a sufficient number will join to warrant a van delivery of goods being started. Little or no capital is forthcoming, but, as trade increases up to about £30 per week and capital accumulates from dividends, a Branch Store is opened. and, from it as a centre, larger van rounds are taken until another Branch is established, and from it again a fresh district is worked. At any of these Branches the members, if they desire it, are encouraged to elect from among themselves a supervising Committee. Those of the local Committee-men at one Branch who show aptitude and willingness are invited to address meetings, to bring members in at the establishment of the next, and so on. No outside aid is called in to assist in propaganda work, and no one who has engaged in it has ever received any remuneration for his services. Knowledge of this by those among whom the work has been carried on has undoubtedly done much to promote its success. Business meetings are held quarterly at Branches where they are applied for, and, considering the sparse population, are very fairly attended, fifteen being required for a quorum. The same agenda of business is gone through as at the Quarterly Business Meetings in Lincoln, and votes given are as valid under the Society's rules as if given at the central meeting. The results of this Co-operative

propaganda that can be shown in figures are ten Branches with a total membership of 3,541, who hold capital amounting to £24,514. They withdrew from the Society in 1910 the sum of £8,569, and deposited in its funds \$2,817; and this is a fair index of what goes on year after year. Using the Society thus as a bank, from which they are at liberty to take withdrawable capital, is regarded by the agricultural class as being one of the greatest advantages arising from Co-operation. The money thus obtained from trading gradually converts day labourers who can get hold of land into small producers on their own account, and enables small farmers and cottagers to buy stock with their own money instead of borrowing. Borrowing working capital or taking up money on mortgage on ordinary lines too often makes the position of small holders one of lifelong drudgery and hopeless indebtedness. But Co-operation, as practised by the Lincoln Society, has altered this for hundreds. It has enabled them to create capital out of their custom at the Store; and, when the Society lends money on mortgage, repayments and interest are made monthly in money, or, in odd instances, in kind, and as the accounts are balanced quarterly, the amount payable as interest is always being lessened.

Goods are exchanged by the Society for butter, eggs, fruit, and vegetables, at current market rates, to the

value of £8,457 yearly.

Stated briefly, the agricultural class in the country districts covered by the Lincoln Society have obtained by Co-operative trading the following:—Possession of £25,145 of capital; a market for a portion of their produce at their own doors; a bank which is continually receiving, in addition to deposits of small savings, dividends on members' purchases—a source whence money can be borrowed on mortgage at easy terms of repayment; and, lastly, constant contact and interchange of ideas with town workmen.

Meanwhile, through legislation, they have obtained the right of local self-government and of limited access to the land. Co-operative business meetings have imparted to them a degree of fitness for exercising the former, and Co-operative shopkeeping has furnished them with the small capital needful to make the best use of the latter. And the work is steadily growing; propaganda meetings are held every year during October and November, as the moonlight nights of these months are considered the most favourable time, harvest being over and winter not yet begun.

As supplementary to the foregoing, the following are brief accounts of what led in each instance to the establishment of country Branches:—

WELBOURN.

The first of the Society's village Branches was opened at Welbourn, thirteen miles distant from Lincoln, on Thursday, May 2nd, 1878. It was established at the instance of a few labourers and cottagers, at whose request a deputation from the Committee of Management visited Welbourn, and explained the constitution and working of the Society. No room being available, the meeting was held under a tree by the roadside, the platform for the speakers being a convenient stone heap. The next meeting was at the Carpenters' Arms, when a promise was given that a weekly delivery of goods by van would be made, to supply those who were willing to become members. When this was done something which had been foreseen speedily happened. Many who had joined the Society were heavily in debt to private traders, and, on their trade being transferred to the Society, they were served with summonses from the County Court. When their cases were submitted to the Registrar and an explanation given, he fixed a monthly payment sufficiently low in amount to enable the dividends on their trade with the Society to be paid into Court as they became due, until all were free from debt. This proof of the power of Cooperation to deliver working people from the thraldom of hopeless indebtedness was not wasted. Its influence on the trade soon necessitated premises being rented, in which a Branch Store, as before stated, was opened, and van rounds were taken from it as a centre throughout the





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surrounding villages and among the farmsteads and cottagers scattered over the neighbouring upland heaths. For a time no difficulty arose, except those occasioned by the trying conditions under which trade is necessarily conducted where the population is scattered, but later it was discovered that reckless credit-giving was beginning to characterise the management. Serious losses occurred. By October 7th, 1879, the quarterly trade had reached f_{012} , and there was a loss of f_{057} on the quarter's working. This engaged the closest attention of the Committee, and shortly after the Quarterly Meeting in November, having satisfied themselves that indiscriminate credit was being given by the Manager, in violation of his instructions, the Committee decided to make a change in the management. On November 17th, therefore, Messrs. Joseph Hartley and D. Mc.Innes, together with an efficient staff of stocktakers, were despatched to the Branch without notice being given to the Manager. They apprised him on entering that he was dismissed forthwith, took stock of the goods, and held possession of them and of the business part of the premises for the remainder of the day and throughout the ensuing night, until the Manager, his family, and household effects were removed, when another was put in possession, and the shop was again opened for business. This stocktaking disclosed a loss of £99 on the trade done between October 7th and November 17th, 1879. As it was ascertained that these losses were mainly caused by the Manager having given credit, efforts were made to recover from him and his bondsmen as much of the loss as was clearly traceable to this cause, but they proved futile, and an attempt to recover the whole or part of the debts from those who had incurred them led to nothing, for some absolutely denied their indebtedness, and others were found to be in such straitened circumstances that it was impossible to recover anything from them. A few continued to trade until their dividends had cleared their debts, but the bulk of the loss was never recovered.

It was this that led the Society to stipulate that a cash deposit of £50, under an agreement, should in future

be made by all Branch Managers. An agreement form, specially framed to meet all possible contingencies was, on the application of the Society, drawn up by the General Secretary of the Co-operative Union (the late Mr. E. V. Neale), and this agreement has stood the Society in good stead in several notable instances right up to the present time. It should be explained that the practice of allowing credit without discrimination was at that time very difficult to detect by a Managing Committee living at a distance, owing to the beginnings of barter trading which has been previously referred to and explained, and which is now such an important element in the trade of all the Society's agricultural village Branches.

The new Manager entered upon his duties in a very sanguine spirit, and, as the drastic course taken by the Committee was approved and commended by the local members, the sales and membership steadily increased and moderate profits were made. Moreover, a Local Committee was elected by the members, representing each village comprised within the district served from the Store, and this had a salutary influence in preventing an influx of worthless or designing members. By the end of another year the quarterly trade had reached £760, the profit being £42. In April, 1884, the sales amounted to for8 quarterly, and as that represented as much business as the premises were adequate for, the owner being willing to sell, the Society purchased the dwellinghouse and shop, three cottages, and a grass paddock, for From time to time, as trade has increased, the premises have been rebuilt, extended, and adapted to the growing requirements of the membership, until the Branch represents one of the most comprehensive and perfect country Stores that it is possible to design. several years attempts were made, with varying success, by the Educational Committee, to bring the members and their families at this Branch under the influence of the educational and social side of the movement. village flower, fruit, and vegetable show and sports, managed successfully for several years jointly by the Educational and Local Committees, was instrumental in bringing the members together once a year from all the villages served by the Store. Concerts and lectures have also been given from time to time during the winter months in the village schoolroom, while Quarterly Business Meetings and the Annual Festivals have kept the local members and Committee closely and constantly in touch with the Central Committee at Lincoln.

It is gratifying to bear testimony to the public spirit always shown by the Committee at this Branch. They have been absolutely unwearying in their efforts to extend the movement, and their self-sacrificing labours have ably seconded the efforts of the General Committee and the Branch Manager. His efforts, his predecessors', and those of the present and past Committee-men have commended themselves to the district generally, and have placed the local Branch in a very commanding position, judged from all standpoints.

OWMBY.

On July 2nd, 1878, a Branch was opened ten miles north of Lincoln, at Owmby, one of several villages in which the Society had delivered goods fortnightly by van for several years previously. A cottage was taken, one room of which was fitted up as a Store, and a working man who had been a member of the Society for some time was put in to live on the premises and conduct the business. He followed his employment daily as a shepherd, and, while his wife attended to the shop during the day, he helped in the evening.

Meanwhile the van delivery from Lincoln was continued, but it was soon seen that this dual system would not work. It had been hoped that after the shop opened members would only have heavy goods by van, and would do the rest of their trade at the shop. Quite the contrary happened. Members complained that the stock at the little Store was not varied or large enough, and as no other premises offered suitable for a large Branch from which a van delivery could be made, and as a consequence

that from Lincoln discontinued, the Owmby Branch was closed in June, 1880, after considerable loss to the Society traceable to several causes. The nature of these may be inferred when it is stated that the most money taken by the Branch in any one quarter was £199, and on this turnover, with £6. 5s. working expenses, there was a profit of £1. 7s. only. Stringent investigation by the Committee, if it led to nothing else, quite satisfied them no good would be done by continuing the Branch, and the causes that led to its closing served as a salutary lesson to the Society, for no other country Branches have since been started on similar lines to that at Owmby, either as regards the selling of goods or the method of supplying them. The van delivery to the village is still continued.

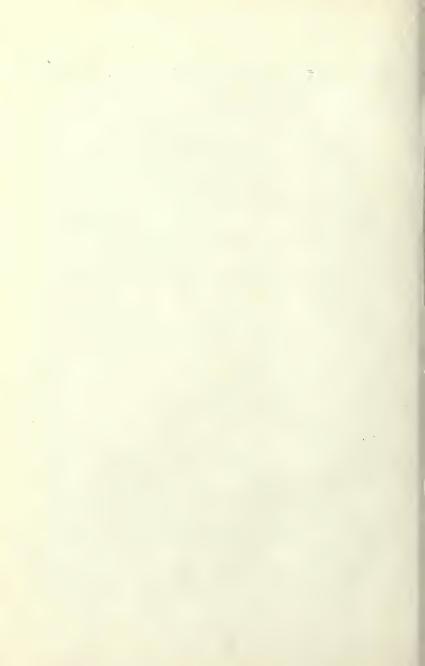
METHERINGHAM.

At this village, which is ten miles distant from Lincoln, a Branch was opened in May, 1881, with a membership of forty-seven. A propaganda meeting had been held a short time previously, at the request of a few local members, in a room which was afterwards used by the Salvation Army. Nine members of the Committee spoke in explanation of the Society's principles, and the first of those present who joined the Society was the then clergyman of the village, Mr. Curtis. The late Mr. W. Taylor, of "Happy Home," was prominent among the promoters of the meeting, and as he afterwards was active in introducing the Salvation Army into the village, he claimed that he had been the main cause of benefiting both the bodies and souls of the working class of Methering-The Branch was opened in hired premises, but a house and shop suitable for the business, which increased very rapidly, were soon afterwards purchased from Mr. H. Read, and the property has from time to time been extended so as to form the present commodious business premises. The growth of this Branch has proceeded, with one short exception, uninterruptedly, although the profits for the first year were very far from satisfactory, partly in consequence of the attempts of private traders









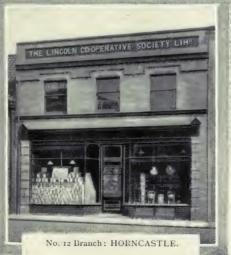
to undersell the Society, and partly owing to lack of sustained vigour in the management. A change in this respect took place when Mr. Skepper, one of the oldest and most respected employés of the Society, was appointed Manager. Under his careful supervision prosperity began, and was continued under Mr. Bradshaw, his successor. A great deal of the good feeling that has always existed at this Branch is attributable to the Local Committee, some of whom, chosen shortly after its establishment, and joined from time to time by new but not less willing and active members, have worked, together with the successive Managers, not only to extend Co-operative trading, but to make the existence of the Society felt in various ways as a vital and elevating social organisation. In 1893 a house which adjoins the Branch was purchased and further extensions were made. trade at this Branch is done practically entirely with people engaged in agricultural pursuits. Mr. Maddison (the Manager), who had seen long service with the Society before being promoted to his present position from Welbourn Branch, emphasises the need that is beginning to be felt for the Society to adopt further means of dealing effectively as a receiving and distributing medium, with eggs especially, but also with other products of the members at the seasons of the year when they are most abundant. The great progress made by this Branch under Mr. Maddison's management indicates keen insight and sound judgment on his part, as well as excellent administrative capacity. In all these respects, indeed, Lincoln Society seems to be well served by its distant Branch Managers.

SAXILBY.

This Branch, established in July, 1883, had an origin different from any of the other village Branches that had been founded previously. One of the shopkeepers, who was also a baker and tailor, finding himself involved in difficulties through giving credit, canvassed several of his customers and a few members of the Society, and memorialised the Committee of Management to open a

Branch in the village. A public meeting was held in the Clubroom of the Sun Inn, and, as enough support was promised to warrant the Society taking Mr. Wilson's shop as a Branch, he was given the position of Manager. The first complete quarter's trade reached \$849, and vielded a profit of \$65, but towards the end of 1884. Mr. Wilson, having failed to satisfy himself or to give thorough satisfaction either to the local members or to the Committee of Management, resigned and left the district. The Manager who took his place did well for the Society, until causes outside of, and apart from, the business compelled the Committee to sever his connection with the Society. This was distasteful to the Local Committee. who resigned in a body. Under new management. admittedly honest, but lacking somewhat in experience and business method, the Branch underwent so many vicissitudes, as far as profits were concerned, that early in 1888 everything connected with it was submitted to a thorough investigation. The remedial measure adopted was the engagement of the Manager whose dismissal had caused the resignation of the Local Committee, and although this second engagement was entered into in compliance with a memorial signed by every member in the district, the Managing Committee were, notwithstanding, exceedingly dubious as to the wisdom of the step. For a short time, however, good results followed. but at the end of 1889 such grave irregularities had occurred that the Manager's bond deposit money was seized by the Society and he was dismissed. For the recovery of the money the Society was shortly afterwards sued at the Assizes, but the claim upon the deposit was held to be good. Under the management of Mr. W. Stephenson, who was then transferred to the Branch from the Central Bakery, the business speedily became a profit-producing concern, and he has managed it very satisfactorily up to the present time, amid very keen competition.







BARDNEY.

Bardney, nine miles distant from Lincoln, by the side of the Witham, is one of the oldest villages in Lincolnshire. It is nearly surrounded by low-lying fen, the frontagers upon which, anciently, when it was unenclosed and undrained, paid tithe of eels, perch, and pike to their own and to Barlings Abbey, one of whose abbots, Simon Mackerel, headed the Lincolnshire division of the rebellion known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, which arose in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire when Henry VIII. seized and confiscated the revenues and estates of the religious That at Bardney was one of the oldest in The date when it was founded is not known. but in 672 it is said to have held 300 monks. Ethelred, King of Mercia, having resigned the crown in 704, became a monk, and was chosen as Abbot of Bardney in 712. He died in 718, and was buried in the village at a place still known as King's Hill.

Notwithstanding the railways that pass by Bardney to Lincoln, Boston, and Louth, and its position upon the Witham, the village remained somewhat isolated up to 1894, when a bridge across the river, built by the County Councils of Lindsey and Kesteven, replaced the old ferry and greatly improved the communication by the shortest and best road to Lincoln.

In 1884 a movement for the establishment of a Store was started by a member named Mr. Parkes, who had joined the Society at Saxilby and had removed to Bardney. A canvass of the village and district was made, which resulted in a requisition being forwarded to Lincoln, asking for a public meeting to be held. For this no room could be obtained but in a public house, which made little difference, however, either to the deputation or the audience, except that they would have been more comfortable had the room been larger and better ventilated. But the denial of a convenient meeting-room gave the promoters possession of a well-founded grievance, and gained them adherents among a working-class community

that had for generations been turbulent, pugnacious, and jealous of all dictation or coercion.

The first meeting and others that followed were so encouraging that eventually a site for a Store was purchased. The position was not a good one, but as it was the only site then or prospectively available it was bought for £125, and on part of the ground a Store and storekeeper's house was built at a cost of £392. The Branch was opened in January, 1886, and a van delivery was instituted to neighbouring villages, hamlets, and farmsteads. During the first quarter £364 was taken, and the net profit realised amounted to £18.

It was especially noticeable that at this Branch about three in ten of the first members signed with a cross, a much larger proportion than at any other village where Branches have been opened.

At the end of two years, namely, in April, 1888, the quarterly trade had reached £711, and the net profit was f_{30} . During these two years the members were put to sore straits to obtain rooms suitable for meetings. first festival was held in a public house dancing-room above a range of stabling. The old room had not been much used for nearly two generations, in which time the march of civilisation had left village dancing, like wrestling. merely a memory of the aged. In the roof and floor there were many chinks and faulty places, those overhead providing ventilation for the pungent odours which stole upwards through the floor from the stables below to the assembled Co-operators, leaving lingering traces in their clothing, and tincturing the viands on the well-plenished But grace was sung none the less heartily, notwithstanding these and other little drawbacks to enjoyment, and the meeting was not wanting in enthusiasm. The candle provided for the Secretary to read his report by guttered and flapped in the breeze from the unpointed tiles, and it had to be shaded by the President's hat to prevent it from going out altogether. The circling draughts gave various climates of effluvia in different parts of the room, and an occasional resounding kick against a



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supporting post or partition in the stables below by a heavy horse, vibrating along the crazy floor, conveyed to the more nervous portion of the audience a discomposing sense of insecurity.

Meetings held under these conditions the Committee at length determined should take place no longer. Every public body that had a suitable room had been applied to, and all had refused. Neither church nor chapel schools could be obtained for meetings, concerts, or lectures. Applications made locally or from Lincoln were alike unsuccessful.

As it was when the Store was opened, so hostility remained active after it was established. Prices of goods were dropped all round by the local traders, but this did not shut up the Stores, although Co-operators were shut out of every suitable room through pressure exercised by interested persons. The local members remained loyal, and as obstinately determined to gain their purpose as those opposed to them were to thwart it.

At the end of the Store was a piece of ground not built upon, where, before it was bought by the Society, had stood two or three "mud and stud" huts, typical of fen architecture. One of the Local Committee suggested that a meeting-room might be built here. This counsel having commended itself to the Committee at Lincoln, a capital room was built at a cost of £100, and was opened on June 20th, 1888, with a public meeting and a tea and concert a festive gathering which was of good augury for the future, for the Branch has made slow but steady progress. Mr. J. W. Sellars (the present Manager) was promoted to this Branch in 1903 from Reepham, where for nine years he was baker and carter. The large development shown by the trade in recent years is in very great measure due to his alert, intelligent management. What opposition there is now to Co-operation in Bardney is confined to close cutting of prices. Members are staunch and trustful, for the "chronic undesirables" have long since been weeded out. As far as the use of public rooms is concerned opposition has died away, and any room can

now be hired for meetings. The Society's hall has long been utilised as a warehouse. The Society has seven acres of garden allotments, divided into rood and half-acre plots. These let well, there being always a number of applicants waiting for a plot to become vacant. This applies also to the two pairs of excellent cottages with gardens, built by the Society ten or twelve years ago. For the last one of these which became vacant there were fifteen applicants.

HORNCASTLE.

The report of the Committee of Management for January 5th, 1887, stated that the Society had purchased at Horncastle suitable business premises, in which a wellstocked and well-appointed Branch Store would shortly be opened, but that in the meantime business was being conducted in a dwelling-house. As to why this dwellinghouse was taken some explanation is necessary. About eighteen months previously an agitation was set on foot by a number of working men in Horncastle, and from some of the neighbouring villages, to better their condition by Co-operation. In the Masonic Hall several public meetings were held, which were attended not only by the promoters of the proposed Stores, but by some of the leading inhabitants of the town, who were wrongly credited with a sincere interest in the welfare of the working classes. One at least of the most influential of these had been in business for himself, had done well, was living on his means, and had great local influence, which he used impressively to dissuade all who came under it from embarking in Co-operation. This opposition and interference was resented by the working class. public meetings having ended in disorder, the promoters, despairing of their ability to answer the objections to Co-operation advanced by their educated and well-to-do critics, invited speakers from the Executive Committee of the Lincoln District Co-operative Association, an organisation which was started in 1882, at the instance of the Midland Sectional Board of the Co-operative Union. Messrs. W Reynolds and D. Mc.Innes (the Chairman and Secretary of the Association) accordingly shortly afterwards confronted the hostile element at a crowded public meeting in the Masonic Hall. After each had spoken, amid frequent interruptions and insults, they were charged with being agitators attempting to set class against class, but the Chairman of the meeting challenged on their behalf any who were present to rise and discuss what had been claimed for Co-operation. The challenge was accepted—one speaker answering the rowdy butcher element present and the other the educated critics—and the outcome of the discussion was so satisfactory to the audience that a Provisional Committee was formed, and the establishment of a Society was decided upon. Committee speedily got to business, drew up rules, chose a seal with the device of a castle, on the top of which was depicted a man blowing a horn, rented a small dwellinghouse, and fitted up one room with a counter and two shelves. Rules were duly registered, and a set of account books was bought. All the equipments for the battle of Co-operation were forthcoming except, alas, an adequate amount of capital. For various reasons this came in very slowly. A local newspaper misrepresented all that had been said and done at the meetings, and maligned the speakers and promoters. Leading traders, whenever and wherever opportunity offered, put pressure on employers to dissuade their men from being Co-operators. humble dwelling-house, with its empty shelves and naked counter, waiting for the stock that could not be bought for want of capital, and for members that could not subscribe it for want of means above what would provide for their daily wants, was humorously dubbed a "penny toffee shop." A barber with working-class customers charitably offered to take it off the Committee's hands and open it as a penny shaving saloon. Twenty-three pounds was all the money the promoters could scrape together after all their exertions. In their extremity they decided to submit the hopelessness of their condition to the Lincoln Society, and, in response to their request, the Society deputed its then President and Secretary to

convene a meeting of the Horncastle Society's members. Although this meeting was but thinly attended, help from Lincoln was promised, and suitable business premises were shortly afterwards bought in North Street, which were opened as a Branch Store. During the first quarter a trade of \$\int 442\$ was done, and it was then realised that a successful future for Co-operation was secured by the fraternal feeling of Lincoln Co-operators. In course of time a bakehouse was added, and at the back of the premises warehouses and cottages were hired, which were ultimately bought by the Society. Progress at this Branch ever since, although slow, has been continuous. As the van delivery extends over a very large area of country, working expenses are heavy, hence the profit realised is not so great as at some village Branches. Agricultural labourers, farm foremen, cottagers, and small farmers form nine-tenths of the membership, a greater proportion here being of these classes than at any other of the Society's country Branches. It is worthy of mention that the shopkeeper whose premises were bought was appointed Manageress, and discharged her duties with much satisfaction to the Society until her resignation owing to family reasons. The management of the Branch is now in the experienced hands of Mr. Charles Larder, an old employé of the Society, who was for many years Manager of the Branch at Welbourn.

SLEAFORD.

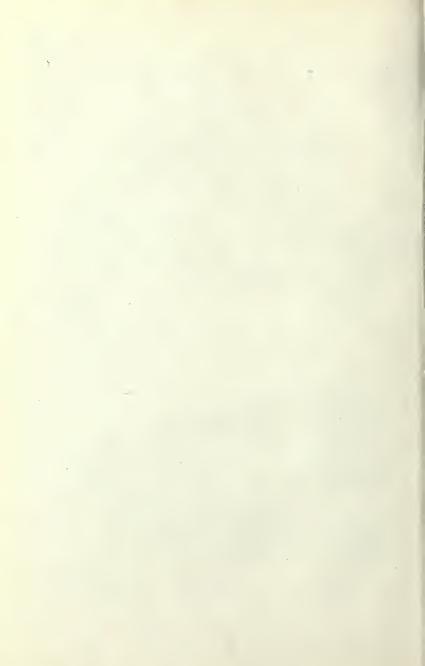
This Branch was opened in South Gate, in hired premises, on October 5th, 1887, with 130 members. An unsuccessful attempt had been made previously to start an independent Society. Messrs. Reynolds and Mc.Innes (Lincoln District Co-operative Association) had, by invitation, addessed a large public meeting in the Clubroom of the White Hart Inn. This was at the time when the Sleaford and Spalding portion of the Great Northern and Great Eastern Joint Railway was nearly finished, and a number of navvies and other migratory workers were present. Impromptu seats of every description that could be got together from a country inn, stables,











and vard gave the dimly lighted room a nondescript appearance well in keeping with the audience. Fumes of rank tobacco from seasoned "clays" created a pungent haze, amid which the principles of Co-operation were explained to as free and easy, as demonstrative and roughly critical an audience as ever assembled anywhere at a propaganda meeting. A navvy who had made numerous racy comments during the speeches, on receiving an invitation from the Chairman and audience. ascended the platform and gave his views as to the duties a model housewife should be capable of performing. It turned out that, although of middle age, he was unmarried. and his opinions were probably for this reason ieeringly derided by several typical navvies' wives who were present. When he proceeded to explain how the sewing and making-up of underclothing and the making and baking of bread might be done at one and the same time by any working woman worthy of the name, a climax was reached, and, amid scornful shouts and jeering laughter. he was compelled to retreat from the platform and take refuge in a corner conveniently near to the door. At the close of the meeting a Provisional Committee was formed. which met several times, but no further action was taken towards forming an independent Society, as the hope of the promoters had all along been that the Lincoln Society might be induced to open a Branch at Sleaford. As soon as this was decided upon at Lincoln many of the Provisional Committee became members of the Lincoln Society, and zealously advocated its claims among the working classes of the town and vicinity. The trade receipts for the first quarter amounted to £370, and this was considered so encouraging that an old chapel at a short distance from the Store, in a by-street, was taken on a lease. Part of it was fitted up and used as a stable, and on the remainder of the space disposable an oven was built and a bakehouse, and on a gallery above a flour warehouse. The baking of bread at Sleaford quickly brought the Society increased business. At the end of the fourth quarter the trade receipts exceeded by £500 those of the first quarter.

At this juncture great hostility was shown by some of the tradespeople, and in one of the local neswpapers a vigorous correspondence, taken part in by the present writer, and which was begun with the view of damaging the Society, on the contrary greatly strengthened its position in the town and neighbourhood, while the unwearving efforts of members of the Local Committee carried the news of Co-operation into the remoter villages and hamlets. The result was such a large accession of members that on April 6th, 1880, a block of property near to the railway station was bought and converted into business premises. Shortly before this time a deposit had been paid on the existing hired Branch premises and the shop adjoining, the whole of which the Society intended to buy, but, on finding that the title deed was hampered by a covenant hindering the trades of a butcher, baker, or miller from being carried on upon the premises, the Committee declined to complete the purchase, and the deposit was returned by the vendor. Although it was not contemplated to carry on there the practical part of any of the trades named, it was thought advisable not to purchase property hampered by conditions of any such character. By the time the new Stores were ready, which was only two years after the establishment of the Branch, the quarterly trade had increased to f1.152, and at the end of another year it had reached £1,681, when a discovery was made by the enemies of the Society that the smoke from the new Co-operative bakery chimney was blacker and more pungent than any other smoke in Sleaford, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to compel the Society to build to the bakehouse a chimney nearly as high as would be necessary for a copper-smelting works. Shopkeepers threatened to withdraw their work from employers of workmen who became Co-operators, all of which hostility pointed to the conclusion that the condition of things in Sleaford before the introduction of Co-operation was for that class of the community presumably perfect. The fact was that more money than formerly had been spent in the town for a couple of years or more before the Stores started owing to the new railway being made, and the consequent influx of migratory labourers into the neighbourhood; and the gradual loss of this temporarily increased trade, which occasioned the shopkeepers much soreness, was laid wholly to the charge of the Stores. Rapid accessions of members and increased trade made further extensions of the premises necessary. These were made at the end of 1892, when the quarterly receipts amounted to $f_{2,253}$. A large warehouse, butcher's shop, and storeroom were built and opened for business in 1893, but as sufficient butchering trade could not be done to make the place remunerative, after a trial for the greater part of a year, the shop was used for other purposes.

Business meetings are held quarterly at this Branch, when a member of the Committee of Management attends and explains the balance sheet, and the agenda of the business is also taken and voted upon as at the central Quarterly Meetings at Lincoln, and a festival is held yearly in October.

MARKET RASEN.

The introduction of Co-operation into Market Rasen in 1876 was due to an official of Mr. Joseph Arch's Agricultural Labourers' League named Mr. Everett, who was stationed at Rasen, which was then the centre of a strong branch. In answer to inquiries from the members as to how their position could be bettered further by combination, he recommended the establishment of a Co-operative Store. After this proposal had been frequently discussed at the League meetings an application was made to the Lincoln Co-operative Society to send a representative to a meeting of League members, held in Ranyard's School, Market Rasen. His advice was that they should establish an independent Society. Shortly afterwards a public meeting was held in the Market Place, when Mr. George Hartley and others from Lincoln were present, who spoke in favour of the establishment of a Society. A Provisional Committee was therefore formed. the meeting for their appointment being held at Mr. Everett's house. He was chosen as Secretary and

Mr. J. Abbott (Middle Rasen) as Treasurer. Members were enrolled and subscriptions taken towards share capital, a shop was secured at an annual rent of f_{21} , and business was begun, the management being entrusted to a friend of Mr. Everett's, who had been connected with the League in Norfolk.

The first Quarterly Meeting, held on January 6th, 1877, was preceded by a tea, at which the attendance was small, but a public meeting held at a later hour in the evening was well attended. The statement of accounts of the quarter's trading submitted to this meeting was prefaced by the following reasons for starting the Society. namely, that the working class might "be saved from the grasp of avaricious men," and "enabled to buy their own goods with their own money." Beginning with twenty-nine members, the Society at the end of the first quarter had reached a membership of forty-nine; their share capital amounted to £194. 158.; and the quarterly sales were £344. Already they were in debt to merchants to the extent of f_{52} , and when the assets, reckoned at the Society's own valuation, were placed against their liabilities, the Society was stated to have made a total profit of 7s. 3\frac{3}{4}d. on its first quarter's working. result, it appears, was considered to justify the assertion that "the Society was in a prosperous state." Mr. I. Cunliffe and Mr. Joseph Hartley (Lincoln) and Mr. W. Campbell (Leeds) each addressed the meeting, and a collection was taken to defray expenses.

Whatever the qualifications of the Manager may have been, it soon became evident that his ideas of his duties were to act in absolute independence of the Committee, who met once a fortnight only, some of them walking as far as five miles to and from the meetings. The Manager and Secretary alone took stock, the Treasurer was not allowed to handle any money, the Manager bought what stock he liked (and too often bought at random), credit was given recklessly, stocks were badly looked after, invoices were kept back from the Committee, and dividends up to Is. Iod. to 2s. were declared when profits did



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not warrant the payment of even is., until the Society became involved to the extent of four or five hundred pounds. While it was thus drifting steadily to ruin through bad management, small Branches were actually started at Ludford, Nettleton, Binbrook, and Howsham. These were placed in charge of incompetent farm labourers, members or collectors for the League, and, as might have been expected, at each of these little Stores leakage was constant. Meanwhile, the Committee were greatly dissatisfied, but from various causes were unable to stem the current of misfortune and mismanagement. Attempting to gain for themselves some knowledge of the value of the stocks by comparing goods with invoices, they at once came to cross-purposes with the Manager, who tendered notice to leave unless his wages were advanced 5s. per week. As this bit of bluff did not answer, the Committee refusing to grant the advance, the Manager wished to withdraw his notice. however, was not allowed, and another Manager was engaged and accepted the position, the retiring Manager informing him when he came that the Society was insolvent. For nine moths afterwards no dividend was paid, but the trade turnover being very fair in amount, a change for the better took place in the business. Failing health unfortunately soon caused this Manager to resign. and he was succeeded by one whose offhandedness and discourtesy to customers again caused a decline. On his departure the Management was undertaken by Mr. Everett's successor in the Secretaryship, jointly with a shopman, but the Society's position was now beyond recovery, and the combination thus set up, even if it had the will, had not the energy and ability to pilot a sinking ship into safe harbour. General slatternliness characterised the management, and a well-meaning but purposeless struggle, persisted in for years, ended at length in an appeal being made, through the Co-operative Union, to the Lincoln Society to take over the business as a going concern. But this the Society refused to do; it opened a Branch, however, in the Store premises and accepted the stock in trade at a valuation. The Market Rasen Society

thereupon went into liquidation, and the bank, to which a large sum of money was owing, received payment of 18s. 8d. in the £, while the members of the Society lost the whole of their share capital.

The vicissitudes of the Market Rasen Society were a direct result of the causes which led to its being started forty-five years ago. When the Union propaganda, instituted by Mr. Joseph Arch among the agricultural labourers in this district, was at its height, part of the mission of some of the propagandists was the establishment of Co-operative Stores. Most of those they established were conspicuous exemplifications of zeal without knowledge. At Wisbech and Spalding, where Societies were started by them, the end, though sooner in coming, was the same as that at Market Rasen. In each instance appeals made to the Co-operative Union for advice and assistance came too late to avert ruin.

The failure of the Rasen Society was by some of its old members aptly described as being due to "reckless credit," "stock going to waste," "buying butter from members dear and selling it cheap, or not being able to sell it at all." "misplaced confidence in nice men." The long struggle of the Rasen members against adverse conditions exhibited their tenacity of purpose, and it was this and their misfortunes that induced the Lincoln Society to open a Branch. With praiseworthy intentions but mistaken judgment the old Rasen Manager was retained by the Lincoln Society, but after being given a fair trial for two years he was discharged, and the management was taken by Mr. Pickwell, who volunteered from Newland Branch, Lincoln, commencing his duties in July, 1894.

In 1897 the Old Brewery at Rasen was purchased by the Society for £575, and on the site the present Stores, bakery, and stables were built, the corner-stone being laid by the late Mr. George Hartley.



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Bassingham.

This Branch was opened in 1892, after numerous propaganda meetings had been held by the Society in response to earnest requests from the working classes in Bassingham and neighbouring villages. The district being, for this part of the country, remote from a railway station, and containing a fair proportion of small holders who had repeatedly requisitioned the Society to establish a Branch, was, on the faith of these, considered a very suitable area. An eligible site was purchased accordingly, and £1,339 was spent by the Society in providing premises before a single member was enrolled. But when business was begun local traders lowered their exorbitant prices and gave discounts as well, and many of the people who had been so importunate for a branch did not become members, but remained dealing with the local traders, of whose previous extortion they had long, loudly, and bitterly complained, and consequently for years the Branch did not earn the current rate of dividend, but it was always paid, nevertheless, by the Society to the local It may be said with emphasis that the position of Manager at this Branch, so long held by Mr. Bates, has been arduous and difficult to fill, and that the present quarterly trade, averaging over £1,100, has been secured amid great opposition from traders, and amid the apathy of many of those who took a leading part at the outset in soliciting the Society's Committee to establish a Branch.

REEPHAM.

A Branch was opened in this village in 1893 in compliance with a numerously signed requisition from the inhabitants of the district, where propaganda meetings had been held at intervals for fifteen years previously. Part of the district served by this Branch was formerly supplied by vans from Bardney Branch and from the Central Stores, Lincoln. At first the business suffered very considerably through being carried on in premises insufficient for its requirements, and the congestion had become so great by 1900, after the Branch had been seven

years established, that the Society purchased for £375 and £75 respectively two suitable properties, so as to provide greater accommodation. New Stores and a bakery were built, and formally opened on April 24th, 1901. From the date of its establishment up to this period the Branch had done a total trade of £21,331, the local members had received as dividend £1,599, and had the sum of £1,050 invested as shares in the Society. The takings at this Branch now total, roundly speaking, £6,000 per annum, having steadily increased under good management, amid much strenuous local competition.

HACKTHORN.

A small Society was established in this village by influential well-wishers of the movement in 1888, under the title of the "Hackthorn and Cold Hanworth Provident Society Limited," and was very successful, both as a business undertaking and as an agency, within a necessarily limited circle, for the promotion of thrift and of educational and social ideals. But, in spite of continuous success, the administrative difficulties that befall small independent Co-operative Societies in purely agricultural villages, and which have been alluded to in another chapter, began to be felt at Hackthorn as years went by by those responsible for the little Society's welfare, and in 1900 a desire was expressed by the Hackthorn members that the Society should be amalgamated with the Lincoln Society. Having been officially approached, the Committee of Lincoln Society expressed themselves as being favourable to the proposal, and stated they realised that amalgamation would be advantageous to the members of The resolutions prescribed by the both Societies. Industrial and Provident Societies Act as necessary to be passed were thereupon submitted to and adopted by two Special General Meetings of both Societies, and were accepted and registered in due course by the Chief Registrar, and, dating from this period, Hackthorn has been pursuing the even tenor of its way as a small but flourishing Branch of the Lincoln Society.

CHAPTER VI.

Effects of Co-operative Trading on Members and Others in the Country Villages.

POR the purpose of this history it was thought advisable by the writer to inquire at the oldest village Branch into the effect that thirty years of Co-operative trading has had upon the circumstances and habits of thought of the members and others in the villages, information having been sought from an employé and from an old member of the Society, and the views of each which follow have since been submitted to and confirmed in the main by other country Branch Managers.

Mr. Kitchen (until recently Manager of the Welbourn Branch) is a native of the village and the son of an old member. He served his term of apprenticeship under Mr. Charles Larder, who is now Branch Manager at Horncastle. Mr. Kitchen is of opinion that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Society, as a trading body, to maintain its position in the rural districts owing to competition being keener. Every dealer now doing business in the villages delivers goods to customers, a practice that did not obtain to a great extent when he (Mr. Kitchen) entered the Society's service. Large farmers use the Society simply as a convenience; it collects from them butter and eggs at market prices, and they take payment mainly in money. A few only, even among those who are members of the Society, take goods in return. With small farmers, however, such as work from three to five horses, the case is altogether different;

most of them are members with whom the Society does well, and no class is more loyal. Among the larger farmers who are members class feelings prevail. When they visit Lincoln they make purchases from large shops of private traders, and object to being seen dealing at the Central Stores, where their own workpeople and poorer neighbours trade when in town. Even though they might receive better value in purchases and have better choice by dealing at the Central Stores in Lincoln for manufactured goods, it is alleged they would not go there for fear of losing caste. This feeling, if it is dying out at all, is dying very slowly.

The ironstone miners in the Welbourn Branch district are very loyal traders. Their occupation fluctuates, but no matter whether their pay is good or bad all of it goes to the Stores. If, however, one bad week is experienced it takes them months to get over it, for although they earn more money than agricultural labourers, they do not leave their dividends in the Society to so great an extent. As a class they are less thrifty. The standard of living of the agricultural workers, as well as of the miners, has risen very considerably during the last sixteen years, mainly owing to the existence of the Society, which is returning to members as dividend, roundly speaking, £700 per annum in the Welbourn Branch district. There is much greater demand now than formerly for dainties such as marmalade and potted beef, and for the best cuts of meat, both fresh and cured.

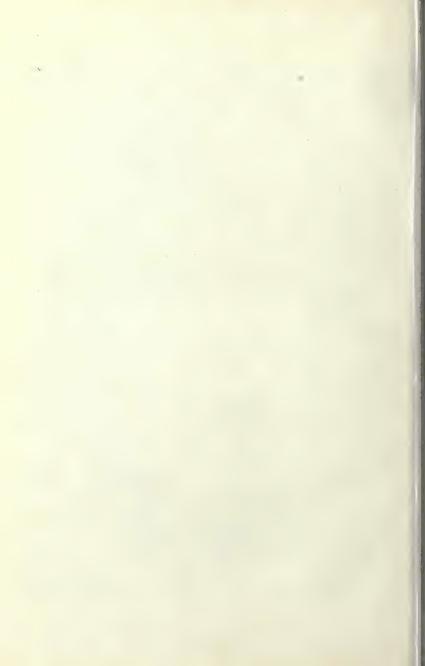
The clergy are, on the whole, friendly to the Society and to Co-operation, but very little outward expression of friendliness is shown. The attitude of the landed gentry and of the upper class of gentlemen farmers is neutral, but on this head, Mr. D. P. Ablewhite, with thirty years' experience, affirms emphatically that the Society and Co-operation are in much better repute among these classes throughout the district than when the Branch was established at Welbourn in 1878. At that time, and for fully fifteen years afterwards, speaking from his own actual experience, Co-operators were



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regarded by them as revolutionary socialists. That feeling is now gone altogether. He states also that the existence of the Society has furthered education in the district. Labourers' children, in instances within his knowledge, have had their period of schooling extended by a year because their parents can afford to maintain them and keep them from going out to work for that extra time by withdrawing money from their accumulated dividends in the Society.

There exists to-day less of the old, deep-rooted tendency among people in the villages to overreach or take advantage of the Society's Managers and employés, such as was frequently the case thirty years ago, for all have now come to recognise that the Society is not established to take advantage of them. Collectivist ideas and ideals have, nevertheless, little hold among the country members; they do not yet realise in any great degree that they are part of a great national social organisation acting for the common welfare. For promoting their education it is suggested that the most effective method of teaching country Co-operators what the movement really is, and their relation to it, would be through the eye, supplementing cinematograph illustrations and dissolving views of Co-operative Stores, factories and machinery, with oral teaching in language easy to understand and free from technical and economic phrases and catchwords.



CHAPTER VII.

Flousing of Members begun, 1883.

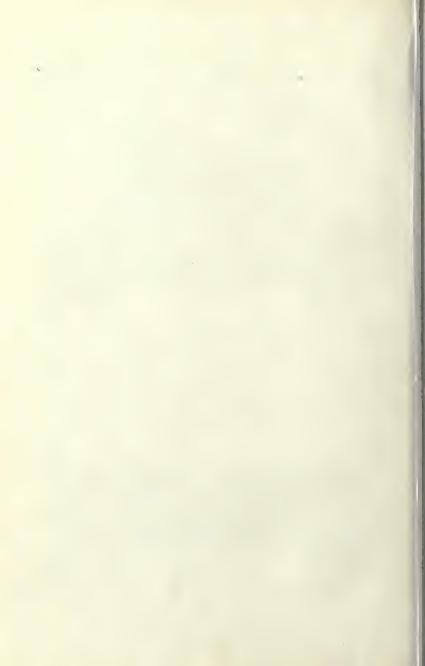
↑ T the beginning of 1883, there being abundant surplus capital, it was decided to provide members with dwelling-houses on the hire-purchase system. Application for advice was made to Mr. F. V. Neale (General Secretary of the Co-operative Union), who recommended the plan of advancing money on mortgage, repayments to be made in monthly instalments, slightly in excess of what the rent of the houses would be. Members are allowed more than one advance at the discretion of the Committee, and, although deposits are not refused, none are asked for except upon property not built by the This opens the House-purchasing Department to the poorest section of the members, many of whom, indeed, were the first to avail themselves of its advantages, twenty-one of the first grants, of £165 each, having been made without the payment of a penny by way of deposit. Occasionally, during prolonged sickness, house purchasers, at the outset of this business, on applying, were allowed to pay interest only, and, in extreme cases of sickness or loss of employment, all repayments have been suspended for several months. The Society has lost nothing by adopting this generous policy; but obviously it is a policy which must be pursued with discrimination, and great responsibility for its being exercised with impartiality and discernment rests upon the Committee of Management. Since 1883, when this branch of business was begun, £142,301 has been advanced, of which sum (including interest) £104,450 is repaid, and fresh advances are constantly being made.



(D)







It is a condition that each application for an advance shall be made in writing to the Committee, and each is accepted or rejected, as the case may be, according to their judgment. The plan adopted in making advances is to ascertain from the members who want houses just what they do want, as rarely any two require houses exactly On each member being satisfied that he has found just the kind of house he wants, if it is an old house. or one recently built and ready for occupation, the Society buys it for him in the following way: If, after inspection by the Building Sub-Committee, the property is considered worth the price asked for it by the vendor, the cost of twice conveying is avoided by the Society providing the money and ordering the conveyance deed to be made direct from the vendor to the purchasing member. He immediately afterwards mortgages the property to the Society, the Society stipulating that it shall receive 4 per cent for the money it has thus advanced,* and either a stipulated sum, or as much more as the purchasing member can afford, as repayment of principal, Society causes these payments to be made monthly so that the instalments may not be too heavy, and it balances quarterly so that the interest shall be light. By the terms of his mortgage deed the purchasing member has to do all repairs and painting, and, being the actual owner so long as he keeps up his payments, he also pays all rates and taxes. If income tax is asked for he pays it, and hands the voucher for the payment to the Society as cash when making his next monthly repayment for the house. The Society, not being the owner of the house, is not liable by law to pay income or property tax; it therefore claims, and obtains from the Special Commissioners the money which the voucher represents to have been paid, and which the house purchaser deducted when making his next repayment of interest and principal to the Society. All the deeds connected with the property remain in the custody of the Society until the repayments are made,

^{*}Five per cent is charged on \pounds_{30} of each advance simply because the Society pays 5 per cent on \pounds_{20} of each member's share capital, and 4 per cent on all over and above \pounds_{20} up to \pounds_{100} ; over \pounds_{100} , $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent up to \pounds_{200} , that sum being the limit of share capital per member.

when the Society endorses on the mortgage deed a receipt which, under the Friendly Societies Act, legally revests the property in the mortgagor.

The foregoing plan applies to houses already built by someone other than the Society, but should application be made to the Society to build a member a house, or several for a number of members, according to a certain plan and in a certain locality, on land which it has to buy or already owns, it proceeds as above stated, only the conveyance is from the Society itself to the purchasing members; and when a deposit is not demanded by the Society the plan adopted is to wait for six or twelve months until the purchasing member has a property of a few pounds in the house, when it is conveyed to him. As business considerations in the end always modify or determine the attitude of a Co-operative Society to social questions, Lincoln Society does not build or buy houses to let, as a landlord, to members, because of the possibility of houses remaining unlet or becoming dilapidated by tenants. It is argued that unless a Society has all its members as tenants it is not equitable for the whole body to bear loss or share in gain, and that it is therefore preferable for each member who may so desire to have a house on the hire-purchase system, taking all benefit and running all risk.

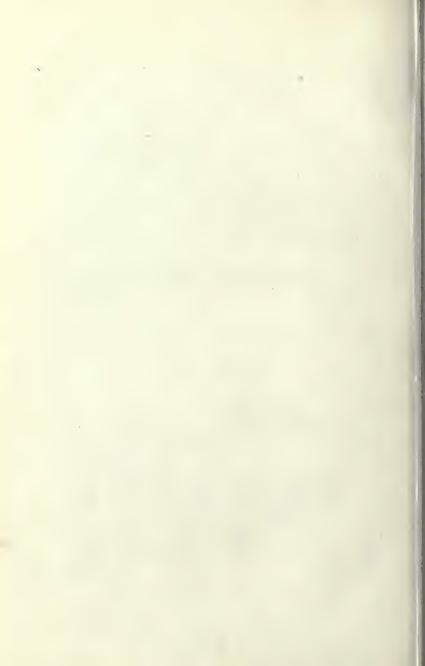




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CHAPTER VIII.

Corn Milling begun, 1886.

THE first form Co-operation took in Lincoln was, as has been stated, that of corn milling, and although loose management had prevented the mill being continued successfully as a Co-operative business, there had, notwithstanding, always been among a section of the members a hankering after a mill. Probably this was because corn milling was an industry that in private hands had long been flourishing in the city. Indeed, it is generally understood that had it not been for money made by milling being available as capital at a critical juncture in the history of the engineering industry that industry would never have reached its present imposing dimensions in Lincoln. Those members who were advocates of milling recognised that their time for action had come when the Committee's report, submitted May 4th, 1885, contained the following encouraging and stimulating paragraph:-

In the midst of trade depression and uncertainty of employment the Society is increasing in membership and paying a larger dividend; its reserves have been increased, and its financial soundness placed above suspicion. What is now wanted is that the members shall decide definitely and without undue delay what Co-operation can do further for them, and then set the Committee about doing it.

Responding to this appeal, the Quarterly Meeting decided to put a roller milling plant of machinery, to produce four sacks of flour per hour, into part of a block of property in Montague Street, which had been purchased for £2,893 a year previously, with the object of providing room for extensions, the Central Stores having become too small for the increasing business. As adjuncts of the mill it was decided to build grain and flour warehouses, offices, and a bakery with six steam ovens. As very many

CHAPTER IX.

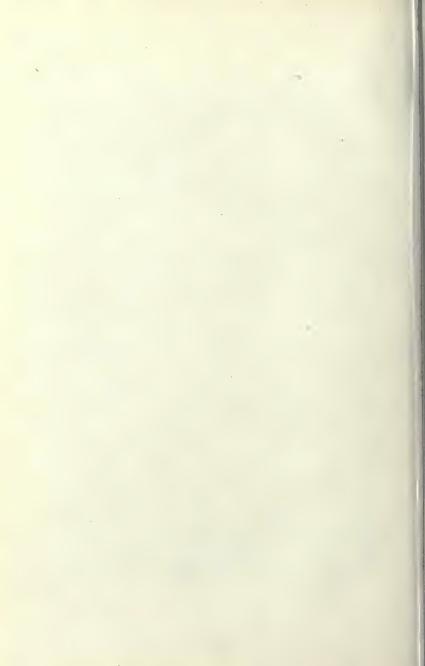
Free School Lane Extensions, 1888.

AS the membership increased, and the trade at the Central Stores continued to increase also, notwithstanding the establishment from time to time of Branch Stores, the accommodation in several of the departments gradually became inadequate for the business. In their report for the July quarter of 1887 the Committee announced that salerooms were needed for furniture, cutlery, hardware, crockery, and other goods comprised in the business of "general house furnishing," and, further, that the Library and Reading-room and the Tailoring and Shoe Departments were much cramped They recommended the enlargement of the Central Stores, or the purchase of a new site to which part of the business could be shifted. Shortly afterwards four dwelling-houses and a joiner's workshop and a yard adjoining the Central Stores in Free School Lane were purchased from Mr. Dawber's trustees for £1,100. were pulled down, and it was decided to build on the site a new block of buildings three storeys high, to comprise Household Furniture, Crockery, Tailoring, and Boot and Shoe Departments, with stockrooms, fitting-rooms, and workshops, besides a Library, Reading-room, and Conversation-room for the use of the Educational Department.

Mr. F. Smith, architect (Manchester), designed the extensions, and the contract for the work was secured by Messrs. Wright and Sons (Lincoln), who began the excavations for the cellars and foundations in the autumn of 1888. From eleven to fifteen feet below the present level the *debris* taken out was especially rich in Roman remains. Thin flooring tiles and bricks were very plentiful. A large number of coins of the Emperor Valerianus were also



J. ROWLANDS, R. E. JONES, F. J. HAYNES, G. CAMMACK, G. HATFIELD, R. K. PHILLIPS, J. ARCHER, J. C. TIMSON, J. WATSON, E. WALKER, J JOHNSON, H. VICKERS. G. RUTHERFORD, J. KNOWLES, G. A. BRITTEN,



found in this stratum, and a bronze foot of an incense burner in the form of a delicately feathered claw. About five feet from the street surface a line of tiles and bricks marked the level of the mediæval city; but while those of Roman make found lower down were perfectly sound, the other appeared merely as red friable earth. Over a large portion of the site, at grave-depth below the mediæval line, an enormous number of skeletons were found. In the oldest of the title deeds connected with the property, dated 150 years ago, some of it is described as "now an orchard, but formerly a portion of the churchyard of St. Edmund." This church was demolished at some time prior to 1644. At a depth of eighteen feet immediately below the main wall, at the south-west corner of the new block, several funereal jars, flatbottomed and formed of fire-baked clay, were found. The customs of cremation and unburnt burial appear to have existed side by side in this country during the whole of the period from 1000 B.C. to the time of Christ's birth, cremation, however, being the more frequent form. The whole of England and Scotland presents traces of the inhabitants who lived here during the closing portion of the Stone Age-2000 to 1000 B.C.—the earliest remains being found in England south of the Humber. It would be difficult to fix upon the age of the pottery, but approximately it may be stated at about 2,500 years.

The first portion of the Free School Lane Extensions which was completed were the warehouse and the rooms devoted to educational purposes, and, to celebrate the opening of these, it was decided to hold a demonstration which should be second to none of the kind held previously by Co-operators in the city. An exhibition of the manufactures of Co-operative Productive Societies filled all the warehouses, and those of the new sale shops also, which were in a state forward enough to permit them being utilised. The exhibition was opened by the late Mr. Frederick Harrison (proprietor of the Lincoln Malleable Iron and Steel Works) with a practical address, and the Reading-room, Library, and Conversation-room were

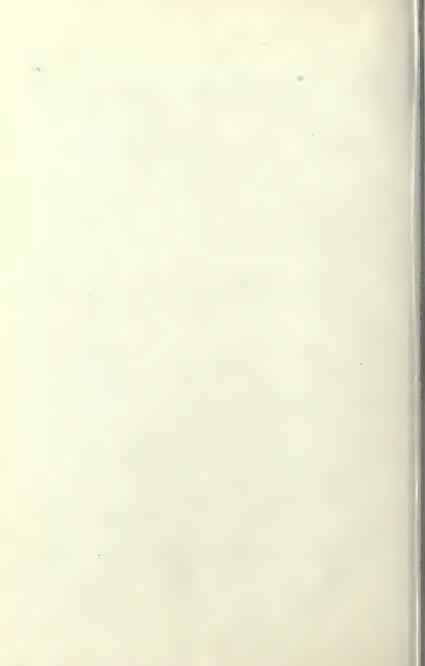
formally thrown open to the public by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Benson), an old friend of the Society. who had opened the first newsroom in 1876. The Archbishop delivered in the Co-operative Hall an impressive address on education. On the platform he was supported by the Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. King), by representatives of the Midland Sectional Board of the Co-operative Union and of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and by the General and Educational Committees of the Society, the Chairman of the latter Committee (Mr. George Bacon) presiding. None were admitted but members of the Society and their wives and delegates from neighbouring Societies, but the hall was crowded to excess, and hundreds were unable to obtain admittance. Immediately after this meeting was over tea was served to 2,800 persons in the Corn Exchange, and afterwards the Chairman of the Society (Mr. William Reynolds) presided over a meeting which entirely filled the spacious hall. Addresses were given by the then Chairman of the C.W.S. (the late Mr. J. T. W. Mitchell), Mr. George Thomson (Huddersfield), the late Mr. Frederick Harrison (Malleable Works, Lincoln), and Mr. John Richardson (Globe Works, Lincoln). The crowding to obtain entrance, before tea was served, was so great that, notwithstanding barriers of strong doors held by stalwart policemen, an old lady, hemmed in, and unable to escape from the crowd on the stairs, had her leg broken.

By the end of 1889 the whole of the new wing in Free School Lane was finished and the shops were stocked, but within the next two years the trade and membership increased so rapidly that more room had to be added to the Boot and Shoe and Furnishing Departments.

Before the building of the Free School Lane wing was begun an unpleasant occurrence arose out of the refusal of a tenant named Woodhead to quit one of the houses that stood on the site. When the Society purchased the property an assurance was given by the vendor that the tenancies of all the houses were monthly or quarterly. Woodhead, however, asserted that his was a yearly



4. BATES, H. HARRISON, J. H. WILKINSON, C. T. CHESHIRE, G. MADDISON, J. T. BROOKES, J. W. SELLARS, W. H. West, W. Sills, C. W. Larder, H. Brummitt, W. Stephenson, W. R. Kev, W. H. Lyons. W. SEWELL, C. C. DAVIS, W. LENTON, W. BAILEY, A. E. CLAYTON, F. KITCHEN, C. LARDER,



tenancy, and he refused to leave after the legal notice to quit served upon him had expired, whereupon the Society proceeded to pull the house down. For doing this an action at law was entered against the Society by Woodhead. The trial took place in London. Evidence was given that Woodhead's rent had been raised several times during his long tenancy of the house, and at different periods of the year. In a rent book which was produced in Court, dating back for twenty-six years, he was scheduled among others as a quarterly tenant and paid his rent quarterly. A witness who collected the rent at the time was called to prove this, and Woodhead could not gainsay it, nor, in fact, any of the evidence. judge told the jury-selected from small shopkeepersthat what they had to decide was whether Woodhead was a quarterly or a yearly tenant, upon the evidence submimitted. It took even them seventy minutes to make up their minds. Verdict: Yearly tenant, the Society to pay £50 and costs. Being dissatisfied, the Society gave notice of appeal, but in consequence of the death of one of the witnesses, whose evidence was of vital importance, the notice had to be withdrawn. Although the case was lost and the expenses were considerable, much was gained by obtaining possession of the site at the particular time when it was secured, for it enabled the contract for the work to be let just before a great advance in prices of building materials took place.

After the Free School Lane wing was finished, attention was directed to remodelling the Central Stores, Silver Street. The lower storey of the entrance stairs leading to the large hall was diverted into Free School Lane, and the space it had occupied, together with the vestibule and a room adjoining, then used as a pork butchery, were converted into a spacious general butchery, the pork butchery being removed lower down to the opposite side of Free School Lane, into the place previously used as a general butchery. The old Reading-room on the second storey, and an adjoining room facing Silver Street, used for many years as an office by the Lincoln Land and Building

Society, were added to the general office, the old boot shop was added to the drapers' shop, and the tailors' shop and warehouse were converted into a Millinery and Mantle Department and workrooms for milliners and dressmakers.

New workshops for tailors, shoemakers, cabinet makers, and joiners were built at the back of the sale shops in Free School Lane.

Towards the end if 1891, in consequence of the rapid development of the lower part of the city, where new streets off High Street were being built, the Committee, at the Quarterly Meeting held November 2nd, directed attention to the inadequate accommodation afforded by the High Street Branch for the existing trade, and for that which might be expected from the influx of population into the new streets in the parishes of St. Peter at Gowts and St. Botolph. These Branch premises had been bought by auction on October 5th, 1888, for £510, and, after floo had been expended to fit them for a Store, they were opened for the sale of groceries and provisions only. For the first quarter, which ended October 2nd, 1880, the sales amounted to £652, but by the end of 1801 they had reached as much as £1,458 quarterly, which encouraged the belief that a large general Store with numerous departments might be placed in High Street and worked profitably. Empowered by a General Meeting of the members, the Committee purchased for £4,400 from Mr. F. Andrews, solicitor, a block of property having a frontage of eighty feet on High Street, and with access to the back by Tanner's Lane. Plans were made for a large Store, virtually a Sub-Central, and these having been approved by a members' meeting on December 3rd, 1892, the foundation stone of the new building was laid. This was seized as a suitable opportunity for holding a demonstration, which was attended with complete success, and showed, more than anything of a similar character carried out previously, the magnitude to which the movement had attained in Lincoln and neighbourhood. of the Society's country Branches was represented by delegates, as were also neighbouring Societies. A silver

trowel and a mallet were presented to Mr. W. Coulson (the President), who laid the foundation stone. Addresses were delivered from the platform erected on the site, and the tea and public meeting which followed far exceeded anything undertaken previously by the Society. Delegates and visitors were served with tea in the Co-operative Hall, and a concourse of 4,800 persons at the Drill Hall and Corn Exchange taxed the Catering Department of the Society to the fullest extent. Possibly the rapid growth of Co-operative Congress being held at Lincoln in 1891, for it directed attention to the Society and made an impression upon the city of the power of the movement which will not readily be effaced.



CHAPTER X.

Farming Begun, 1889.

TN April, 1889, the Society purchased for £550 a small farm of 11½ acres at North Hykeham, 2½ miles from the Central Stores, Lincoln. Part of the land was planted with fruit trees during the following autumn, and the whole was brought gradually into garden cultivation. A cottage, outbuildings, and piggeries were built in 1801 and added to in 1894. A large number of pigs are fattened at this farm and some are bred, when the conditions of the market make breeding profitable. The farm has been of much service to the Society, as it forms an avenue for the utilisation of refuse, which was formerly wasted or given away for the trouble of removing it. Ordure and refuse from the slaughter-houses are taken down to the farm. and there mellowed and used for manure. The farm has now been under garden cultivation for twenty-two years. When the Society purchased it the part nearest to Hykeham Lane was contemptuously described as "a mere rubbish heap." The portion referred to is composed of drift shingle, sand, and alluvial silt lying on blue clay forty feet thick, while the lower half of the farm which extends to the beck is alluvial deposit, in places mixed with, and in places lying upon, brown marl. found necessary to drain this part thoroughly in 1893, as the old drain tiles had become fouled and broken, and patches of land here and there were waterlogged. The prediction that the Society would make nothing of the land has been entirely falsified. It was gradually brought into good heart and cultivation, and has yielded good crops. Up to the end of 1893 this farm had made a total profit of £691, but in 1894 it showed a balance to the good of only fi. 19s. 4d. This decline was due partly to



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damage done to the fruit and early vegetables by the exceptionally severe frosts in the spring, and partly to the prevalence of swine fever in the district, which caused many of the markets to be closed. Restrictions were also placed upon the removal of all swine within infected areas for the greater part of the year, so preventing the piggeries being utilised to their full capacity. good years followed, but unfortunately, in March, 1897, an outbreak of swine fever necessitated the slaughter of pigs valued at £157. This amount, however, the Society received from the authorities as compensation. as could be ascertained the disease was introduced by pigs bought at various markets. After the piggeries had been cleansed and disinfected three months elapsed before they were permitted to be reopened, and the end of the year was reached before they were fully restocked. There was, notwithstanding, a profit of £120 on the year's working of the farm, due, possibly, to an increased output of produce from glass houses for tomato and cucumber growing, which had been built in 1896. Encouraged by the success which had attended the cultivation of this small farm, the Society, at Lady Day, 1895, entered as yearly tenants of Gregg Hall Farm, North Hykeham, comprising about 34 acres, 141 of which were old pasture, at a yearly rent of £100. The profit on the first year's working was £102. An exceptionally dry season in 1901 resulted in a loss, and, concurrently with this, the landlord proposed to take eighteen acres away from the farm for his own purposes without reducing the rent, stating that he considered the remainder of the land was well worth £102 per annum. As the increased fertility had been imparted to the land by the Society's expenditure in labour and management during the previous six years, the Committee indignantly declined to entertain the proposal and gave up the tenancy.

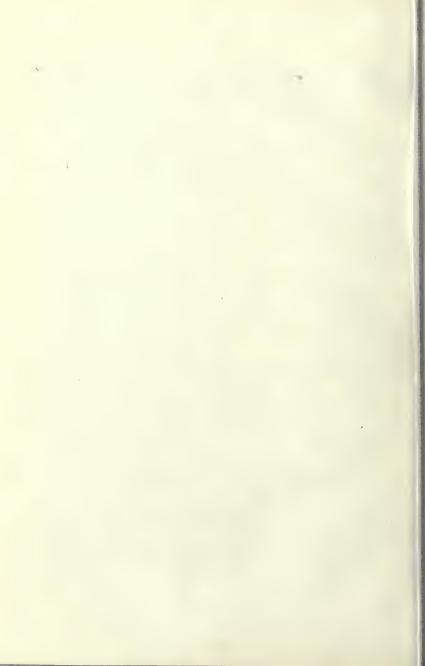
Early in 1899 the Vicarage Farm, North Hykeham, was taken on a fourteen years' lease, with full freedom of cultivation, at a yearly rent of £200. Other plots of land near it have been rented or bought, and the entire acreage

now worked from the Vicarage homestead is 167, twenty-nine being permanent pasture and the rest arable.

In 1910 the Society made an important departure in purchasing a mansion, buildings, and estate at Branston. three miles from Lincoln, comprising Ashfield House, with its lodge, hunting stables, conservatories, and gardens, two farmsteads and outbuildings, two labourers' cottages, fifty-one acres of grass, and 360 acres of arable land. The estate is heath land of varying degrees of heaviness, lying upon limestone, and has the reputation of being one of the best in the district. There are few bleaker places than this part of Lincoln Heath when the north or east winds sweep across it from the German Ocean, and there are no hills or break of any kind to shelter the great plain from westerly storms. For anyone who knows the history of heath and fen it is well worth while on a clear day to stand at the edge of this great plateau so as to realise fully the changes that both tracts of country have undergone during the last century and a half. Far as the eye can reach, what was then moor and morass is now rich land under high cultivation. Only three miles from Ashfield House, as the crow flies, stands Dunston Pillar, erected as a lighthouse before the heath was reclaimed to guide travellers across it. Most of the Society's estate lies on the heath, but a portion stretches downwards to within a mile of the Carr Dyke that skirts the fens. This canal was made by the Romans at a level midway between the top of the heath and the deepest part of the neighbouring fens to serve as a catchwater drain for the streams that flow down from the springs on the heath. The water thus intercepted was prevented from deluging the fens below, being conducted along the Carr Dyke by gravitation for forty miles southward, where it was discharged into the River Welland at West Deeping. This ingeniously graded watercourse became choked and neglected during the centuries of Viking invasions and tribal wars that followed the departure of the Romans, and fell into disuse for its original purpose, but emphatic testimony to its ancient utility and



Standing: G. Beck, D. Worth, Mis. Trotter, C. Dawkins, C. Treavett. Sitting: Mis. Dring, W. Hillman, Mis. Quarm (*President*), T. Mathers (*Secretary*), Miss Turner, W. Roberts (*Treasurer*).



effectiveness has been given by the eminent engineers who, in recent times, have successfully accomplished the task of freeing the fens from being submerged by flood water from the uplands.

Barley, wheat, wool, mutton, beef, and pork, are among the chief products of the estate. Red shorthorn cattle, long-wool sheep, and white curly-coated pigs, all from pedigree stock, of breeds most suitable for the soil and climate, are successfully bred, raised, and fattened. The farm management is in the competent hands of Mr. John Archer, who, beginning as a labourer, has been forty years a foreman, for seven of these on this estate with its previous owner, the late Mr. C. S. Dickinson, corn miller and merchant. The entire acreage under cultivation by the Society at Hykeham and Branston is 579, and statistics setting forth the financial results from the beginning are given in the appendix.

The following is a list of land occupied by the Society. All of it is the Society's property except the Vicarage Farm, North Hykeham, which is held on lease:—

	Acres.	Roods.	Perches
North Hykeham—			
Market Garden	. 11	2	
Vicarage Farm	156		
Grass Field	. 5	3	25
Branston—			
Ashfield House Farm	237		
Rectory Farm	174		
Archer's Farmstead	. —	2	
Bardney—			
Grass Field and Allotments, the latter			
Let to Members		_	
Grass Field	. 2	2	_
Metheringham—			
Grass Field	. 3	_	
Greenwood's Paddock, &c	. I	. 2	21
Market Rasen—Grass Field		_	_
Reepham—Grass Paddock	. I	2	

The Society also owns two small farms at Welbourn, one of which, containing 4 acres, 2 roods, 24 perches, is let to Mr. Scott, and the other, let to Mr. Dowler, containing 8 acres, 3 roods, 7 perches.

CHAPTER XI.

The Educational Department and Women's Guild.

HE first grant for educational purposes made by the Society was at the General Meeting held on February 4th, 1877. Before that time, although the rules provided for an educational grant, to be administered by a separate Committee, no grant had been made by the members, and no Educational Committee was appointed until November 27th, 1873, twelve years after the Society's establishment. Their names follow:-Mr. Geo. Hartley, President; Mr. G. Stabler, Treasurer; Mr. J. Orton, Secretary; Messrs. G. Lewis, J. Smith, E. T. Trenery, E. Hallam, J. P. Riley, W. Coulson, J. Hatton, and A. Bailey. The main work of the Committee for four years even after it was elected seemed to be to educate the members up to the point of granting them funds. Those who know most about Co-operative Societies are aware that when trade dividends of only is. in the f are being made, it is not easy to induce general meetings to vote much for educational purposes. The first Educational Committee was confronted with that undesirable condition of things, but they were not daunted. On the contrary, while pressing for a grant from the profits, they also set about raising money by their own exertions. From concerts, readings. and entertainments, contributing to the programme themselves, and being assisted by friends, they realised a little over £18, with which they ventured to open a free Reading-room for the city, anticipating by twenty years the sluggish municipality, just as the Society anticipated by thirty-five years the weekly half holiday for shop assistants now general in the city. Having expended the greater part of the £18, the Educational Committee made

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD-LINCOLN BRANCH.



Sitting: Mis. Bugg, Mis. Trotier, Miss Turner (President), Mis. Knowles (Secretary), Mis. Quarm, Mis. Rutherford. Standing: Mrs. Gibbin, Mrs. Bennett, Miss Young, Mrs. Doughty (Treasurer), Mrs. Maltby.



an earnest appeal to the members, which resulted in the next Quarterly Meeting granting, but only by a very narrow majority, 14 per cent of the net profits for educa-The movement thus begun, at much individual and collective self-sacrifice, has never retrograded. Amid great opposition at first, step by step, and sometimes very slowly, the work of the Educational Department has been developed. Co-operatively nurturing, maturing, and fructifying the minds of a generation and a half of young members. Being free to everybody—a feature at that time unique in Lincoln—the first newsroom was greatly resorted to in the evenings, and it was a gratifying feature that, from the very beginning, good order was always observed by those attending. A Library was gradually formed; for several years grants were made to the old School of Science Prize Fund; lectures and concerts were given, and discussions held, throughout each winter; and meetings of an educational and recreative character were promoted at the country village Branches that were at that period being established. The Educational Committee of the Society were represented upon the Committee that introduced the first University Extension Lectures into Lincoln, and some of its members—among them the present writer—were students attending the lectures which were held in the Co-operative Hall. several years, at Welbourn, the Educational Committee. working in connection with a Committee of local members, promoted a conspicuously successful series of flower, fruit, and vegetable shows and general village sports.

By 1886 a quarterly "Record" had been established, and reciting competitions and choral festivals for children of members had been for some time actively promoted.

When the Rev. Dr. Benson, Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral, opened the first Reading-room on October 4th, 1876, he prophesied that to the single old shattered bookcase then standing solitary in a corner, others would in time be added until they reached all round the room. By the time he had become Archbishop of Canterbury and returned to open the existing Newsroom and Library

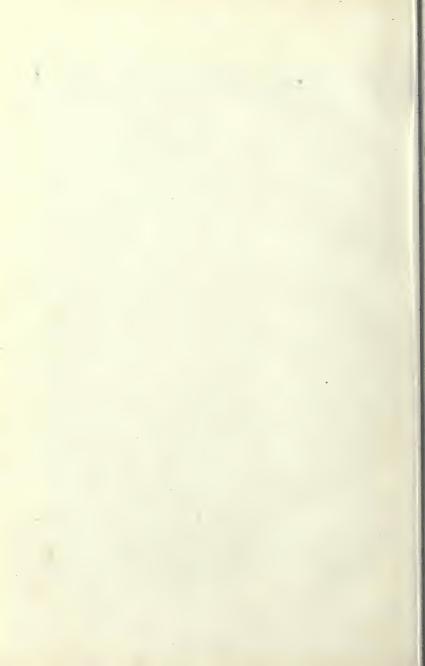
in Free School Lane, that prophecy was more than fulfilled: but many of those Committee-men who were at the opening of the first room had, in the many changes and chances of working men's lives, been scattered to the four quarters of the earth. One was in New Zealand. one in America, and one in Germany; others were in distant parts of England, and others, again, had passed to that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." Those who remained had realised, and by their work had caused others to realise, that free association is one of the great agencies of human progress in more than a material sense, and that no body of men can fulfil their true existence who make self the centre on which all their thoughts and actions turn. Abandoning sympathy and mutual helpfulness, and abandoning ideals. the best designed institutions become in time mere shadows of the substance they once represented, hence the value and importance of an Educational Department to a Co-operative Society.

On becoming established in their capacious and wellappointed new quarters in Free School Lane, and receiving grants increasing in amount with the steady growth of the Society's business, additional work by the Educational Committee became possible and was successfully undertaken. Ambulance classes, gymnasium training for children of both sexes, sick nursing classes, and the establishment of choral singing classes, out of which the Co-operative Prize Choir as time went on was created, were some of the outstanding features of these developments. The choral classes and choir have been for many years carefully trained and conducted by Mr. D. Hirst, of the Cathedral choir. In addition to many minor prizes, the Choir has twice in succession won the Co-operative Union's Midland Section Challenge Shield. While continually promoting within the Society a taste for music of a high class, it has acted also as a fructifying stream, contributing members to the choirs of the various places of worship in the city. A laudable attempt to re-establish University Extension Lectures succeeded

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD. - BRACEBRIDGE BRANCH,



Standing: Mfs. Larkin, Mfs. Elliott, Mfs. Maddison, Miss North, Mfs. Pearson. Sitting: Mfs. Kirk, Mfs. Alston (Sevetavy), Mfs. Harris, Mfs. Rosling: Mfs. Rarking, Mfs. Rosling.



fairly for a season or more, but languished, and eventually came to an end owing mainly to the prevalence of overtime work, which is a constantly recurring feature of the industry of Lincoln whenever periods of good trade prevail in the engineering business.

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New features were imparted to the educational, social, and recreative work of the Society by the establishment of a Branch of the Women's Co-operative Guild, which followed, after a time, a public meeting held, at the instance of the Educational Committee, on October 24th, 1888. The meeting was addressed by Mrs. Lawrenson and Miss Llewelyn Davies, who urged the necessity of a higher conception of the movement being created among women than that of the merely material conception so widely prevalent. The following, elected on November 2nd, 1892, were the first Committee of the Women's Guild:—President, Mrs. Hodgett; Secretary, Miss Tooms; Committee, Mrs. Read, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Trotter, Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Bellamy, Miss Poole, Miss Baines, and Miss Pickering. There can be no doubt that the movement thus introduced into the Society has been a beneficent force, not only among the women, but in the general work of the Society. Acting with the Educational Committee, several of whom are women, the Guild has been an important element in promoting ideas and developments and in keeping attention steadily directed to ideals which are obscure to those who become Co-operators solely from a desire to obtain the necessaries of life at retail prices and a quarterly dividend in return. Successful Branches of the Guild were established at Bracebridge and Hykeham in 1910. The Annual Congress of the Women's Guild was held in Lincoln in June, 1903.



CHAPTER XII.

The Building Department.

TT has been alleged so often that productive Co-operation is more difficult to conduct successfully than distributive that it has become a platitude, used by newspaper writers and people generally, when referring to the growth of distributive Co-operation. The statement is re-echoed and seemingly accepted without question even by Co-operators. There is undoubtedly an element of truth in it, but the statement is just as applicable to private productive undertakings as to those embarked upon by Co-operators. While the history of the movement records failures in production it is full also of instruction and encouragement, for, wherever production has hinged upon and been an outgrowth of distribution, goods being produced for use and not speculatively, success has rarely been ultimately wanting. bakeries, butcheries, tailoring, and other minor productive adjuncts of Distributive Societies prove the truth of this statement, as also on a larger scale do the Productive Works of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. Productive enterprises often fail, among other causes, from insufficient capital or from inefficient management, whether undertaken privately or Co-operatively. over, in the Co-operative movement too often in the past there has been an amount of disinclination to secure and adequately remunerate managerial ability of a high order For example, a man at £200 a year is, perhaps, put to fill a place that needs one whose ability commands three times that amount outside the movement. In respect to this feature, however, recent years have witnessed a decided change for the better, and Co-operative production has prospered accordingly. addition to this defect of judgment and lack of a sense of proportion, so long prevalent, there is observable also in members' meetings an amount of impatience for results,

and of fitfulness—not to say fickleness—of purpose, which makes the pursuit of any productive enterprise far from easy by those who are elected to the Boards of Management of Distributive Societies. Just as in some unfortunate countries all buildings have to be put up and all the domestic and other arrangements of the people based upon the probability of earthquakes occurring, so it is also in a sense in Co-operative Distributive Societies. An earthquake or upheaval of panic or of partizan feeling may arise in a week and commit to summary destruction some project that simply needs patience or change of method, or both, to become successful.

The Building Department of Lincoln Society has been conducted under difficulties to some extent traceable to both the effects alluded to as being inherent in Co-operative administration in its elementary stages, and the existence of which, indeed, need not cause wonder, for the rights and privileges of a Co-operative Society are freely extended to those who have no thought of its needs and no knowledge of the laws and causes that hold it together. This is a risky policy, but Co-operators accept the risk and take into membership all sorts and conditions of men and women—a course which greatly hinders a Society from acting as a solid progressive body actuated by a common impulse, unless provision is made meanwhile for systematic education in ethics and economics.

The Building Department came into existence as a natural outgrowth of the Society's needs. After reaching its majority the progress of the Society was rapid, eventually necessitating much work being done by the Society itself which had previously been given out by contract to joiners, builders, plumbers, and painters. These trades were therefore gradually entered into in a small way by the Society doing at first a part only of its own work, and afterwards embarking in projects on a larger scale to meet the growing requirements of its increasing business. Substantial advantages accrued even from the beginning, for the Society, from its financial position was able to obtain at first hand and always to use good

material. Better and more enduring work was consequently accomplished than the Society had been able to secure in many instances from outside contractors. One of the first large jobs undertaken was the reconstruction of the old and the erection of the new buildings and chimney shaft needed for the mill and engine house, and for the bakery and first warehouse on Waterside North, and another was the slaughter-house and Hide and Skin Market on Sincil Bank. These departures into the realm of Co-operative production were regarded with mixed feelings by the members, and the way in which some of the work at the slaughter-house had been done was severely criticised at members' meetings, where a desire was persistently expressed that the Building Department should be placed on a more business-like footing by the appointment of a Manager capable of conducting larger operations than those which had already been undertaken. Eventually this course was adopted, and out of a number of applicants a Building Manager was chosen, and afterwards, in addition to the building of dwelling-houses, cottages, and villas, contract work of much greater magnitude than had hitherto been engaged in was sought and obtained. Abattoirs for the City Corporation, extensions of the County Hospital, and of some of the local engineering works were secured by tender, and the work executed satisfactorily, gaining for the department a good reputation, until at last the Society committed itself to a contract to build the new General Post Office in Guildhall Street. For various causes well known to those who have been concerned in doing Government work, such contracts are always risky undertakings, and a Manager needs to possess much ability, determination, and tact to overcome obstacles which present themselves in all large Government undertakings of this character. After the acceptance of the contract the Government architect altered the plans, carrying the basement lower down than was originally intended, which caused a spring of water to be struck when excavating for the foundations, thereby impeding the work, and causing great trouble and expense, and other hitches constantly occurred through the

Society having to wait for work in artificial stone, let to contractors by the Government. Moreover, from the time of the Manager's engagement a section of the members had not viewed with confidence the choice that had been made by the Committee, and the lack of approval that was manifested introduced a discomposing element into all discussions at members' meetings that related to the management of the Building Department, and this, by sapping confidence somewhat, did not tend to promote those conditions which command success. Meanwhile it was gradually becoming apparent to the Committee that the Building Department office staff were lacking in the technical knowledge necessary to secure accurate costing. and that the conditions under which the department was conducted prevented the Society's chief accountant from exercising adequate control over the details of the Building Department's accounts. Arising out of this, it was discovered later that profits which had not been made had leaked away as dividend on the strength of valuations of work in progress, and of work that had been from time to time executed, without being accurately costed, and of stock that had not been accurately appraised. As the department was balanced and its stocks taken only once a year these defects had been slow in disclosing themselves. A change of management which had been made had brought about some improvement, but had not remedied the defects referred to, and a good deal of unrest was manifested. Special members' meetings were held, and the losses of heavy amounts which had disclosed themselves should, it was agreed, be met from the reserve When, however, as a final blow, a large deficit appeared later in connection with the Post Office contract, entailing another call upon the reserve fund, a resolution was carried by a General Meeting that a special stocktaking should be conducted and an audit made of the Building Department accounts by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and that a printed report thereon, supplemented by recommendations as to future working, should be submitted to the members. By another resolution the Committee were precluded from engaging in

contract work beyond the amount of £1,000, which partly suspended the work of the department for a period. Cartwrighting had been abandoned as unremunerative some time previously, and has not since been resumed.

The report of the Co-operative Wholesale Society was presented to a General Meeting in December, 1907, by Mr. T. Brodrick (chief accountant), together with recommendations as to the future working and keeping of accounts, and the position and prospects of the business were exhaustively reviewed.

This appears to have been a turning point in the history of the department. The management was again changed, and after a short time sanction was given at a General Meeting, amid considerable opposition, for extensive additions, alterations, and reconstruction of the Central Stores to be undertaken by the department. These developments were finished in 1910, and it is generally agreed that they have been accomplished at moderate cost, and reflect much credit upon the Manager and staff.

Among minor features, the extensions comprise a magnificent public café, occupying the whole of the basement in Silver Street, and the additions made to the Drapery, Millinery, and Fancies Department place it easily, both as to space, fittings, and general equipment, in the front rank among similar places of business in the city; this being strikingly shown in the roomy, well-appointed workrooms, and in the showcases and other appliances for the display of goods in the Fancies Department.

For a considerable time the Building Department has been well employed in erecting houses for sale to members on land belonging to the Society, and in executing occasional contract jobs, since the £1,000 restriction alluded to was removed. The office, workshops, engine, machinery, and woodyard lie behind the High Street Stores, and are entered by Tanner's Lane.

The capital embarkment in the business is £2,500, and the average number of employés in 1910 was 95. Statistics from the beginning are given in the appendix.

Gent of

CHAPTER XIII.

Conclusion.

HEN the Lincoln Society was established there were not wanting those sel would speedily become impotent and fade away like a phantom. This was really not to be wondered at, for Co-operation, as exemplified by the Society, is an attempt to reconstruct some of the conditions that govern the production and distribution of wealth—a task that is not easy, especially for men with imperfect commercial education, and whose time is mainly spent in hard manual toil. The task demands the exercise of determination, perseverance, and probity—qualities that are not profusely distributed in any class. But, notwithstanding many drawbacks, the progress of the Society has been continuous; it has "marked time" more than once, but it has never fallen backward, either educationally or commercially. It has always sold goods at moderate profits, and has catered for the poor labourer as well as for the better paid artisan. It has paid moderate and safe dividends and been financed on sound principles; hence it has easily withstood demands on its capital occasioned by recurring periods of local trade slackness. Its general policy has been characterised by consistency and continuity. Experience and sound judgment have not at any time been put aside merely for the sake of introducing new blood into its directorate, though sufficient of this has been forthcoming when required to maintain its policy fresh and vigorous. It has trained within its own business in late years, and now possesses, a body of employés who, in their respective positions, favourably compare with any other for character, capacity, and integrity. By its practical propaganda it has done more than any other Co-operative Society in Great Britain to better the condition of the agricultural working class, and it has accomplished this without financial sacrifice, because it has been wise enough to recognise that theoretical methods of propagating Co-operation and administering Co-operative business are not universally applicable. The struggles and feebleness of the Society's early days are over, never to return, for, accompanying the successful accomplishment of great things during late years, there has grown up within the Society a consciousness of power to achieve

greater.

This consciousness of power was exhibited in a very marked degree and with marked effect when the Society was attacked in 1006 by emissaries of a then existing traders' organisation, with headquarters in London, from which a virulent anti-Co-operative newspaper was published, and with a branch office in Sheffield, a centre from which also anti-Co-operative literature was issued. hired body of bill distributors from this place visited the city one market day, flooding it as they had flooded other Co-operative centres, with speciously worded bills and leaflets, casting discredit upon the Society and its management. Anticipating the attack, which was similar to one made with disastrous effect upon a neighbouring Society only a short time before, the Committee of Management had made their plans and were prepared for the workers Fighting them with their own weapons, the Committee, within two hours, had the Society's position set forth in effective language, supported by unimpeachable statistics, on all the hoardings and in spacious paragraphs of the advertising columns of all the local newspapers. The power of the press and of printers' ink used in a good cause was never more effectively The malicious enemy who had thought to cause a run on the Society's capital by creating a panic, found their efforts absolutely futile. Not a shilling was withdrawn, and the attitude of the members of the Society was one of smiling contempt for the blatant assailants who retired beaten and chagrined to attack other centres where the Co-operative sentinels were not as wary, alert. and resourceful as those of Lincoln.

Another quiet, but equally striking exhibition of this now deep-rooted consciousness of power was witnessed when the losses in the Building Department caused anxiety in the city among all friends of social and There was widespread unrest and economic reform. dissatisfaction among the Society's members, but no panic. There was in evidence also all through this trying period another very satisfactory feature, namely, a steadfast and even dogged determination to discover the causes of failure, so as to avoid them in future. Patient determination of this character, such as was then exhibited, is a valuable asset in any working-class Society. At the very large members' meetings that were held at this period everything was carried through decently and in order: the business began, was continued, and ended, sometimes amid hard words, but always without tumult. Numerous other minor instances might be cited, if necessary, but the foregoing will suffice. They indicate with sufficient clearness how well the lesson of confidence in the power and vitality of Co-operative principles has been learned in this ancient city.

To the Society's Co-operative sympathy and active assistance two successful neighbouring Societies owe their establishment. It has absorbed two moribund Societies, and planted vigorous Branches at each place. It is continually shedding the lustre of its intelligence and conferring its many benefits and advantages upon the struggling poor in the villages, where its borders are constantly being enlarged. Let us hope, then, that in the days to come the Society may continue to be actuated by this excellent spirit, which is promoting solidarity in the highest and best sense, and that it may never descend so low as to make mere materialism its god or to dissociate wealth from responsibility.

CHAPTER XIV.

List of Presidents, Treasurers, and Secretaries from 1861 till 1910.

PRESIDENTS.

		I KESIDI	DIA T	٥.			
		LECTED.				ELEC	
Mr.	Thos. Jackson	1861	Mr.	WM.	REYNOLDS		1889
,,	Edwin Teesdale	1863	,,	Jos.	BROADBERR	Y	1891
,,	Wm. Sudbury	1866	,,	Wм.	Coulson		1892
,,	EDWARD HALLAM	1867	,,	Јонг	W. CODLIN	īG	1894
,,	HENRY WHITE	1869	,,	GEO	RGE LEWIS	• • • • • •	1896
23	GEO. HARTLEY	1872	,,	WM.	Hewson		1897
,,	Geo. Richardson	1876	9.9	Јонг	W. Codlin	۱G	1899
,,	Joseph Hartley	1878	,,	GEO	RGE SHARPE		1901
,,	WM. REYNOLDS	1880	,,	Јон	W. CODLIN	١G	1903
٠,	Joseph Martin	1882	,,	WM.	Hewson		1905
,,	Wm. Coulson	1884	,,	GEO	RGE HARRIS		1908
,,	GEORGE WHITE	1886	,,	Сная	s. Ostick		1909
, .	Wm. Coulson	1887					
		Treasu	DED	C			
		I KEASU	KEK	э.			
Mr.	JOHN HARRISON	1861	Mr.	ED.	T. TRENERY	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	1874
22	JOHN NEWSAM	1863	. 99	Roв	ERT LEWIS		1876
,,	George Lewis	_	,,	GEO	RGE HARTLE	Y	1882
,,	Edwin Teesdale	1866	,,	WM.	Coulson	• • • • • •	1897
		_					
		SECRETA	ARIE	S.			
Mr.	Thos. Parker	1861	Mr.	GEO	RGE UFTON		1868
,,	Josiah Simpson	1861	,,	GEO	RGE LEWIS		1881
*1	THOMAS JACKSON	1863	,,	Dun	ICAN MC.INN	ES	1882 =
,,	WILLIAM WALKER	1865	,,	WIL	LIAM TURNE	R	1903
,,	CHARLES HIGGINS	1866	,,	GEO	RGE HARRIS		1909

CHAPTER XV.

Statistics.

Progress of the Society from its Commencement in 1861 to December 31st, 1910.

Year.	Members.	Capital.	Sales.	Profit.	Average Divid'nd	
				£	s. d.	£
06-		£	£			
361	74	129	365	13	0 9	
362	119	368	2007	74		
363	152	439	1914	75		
364	162	454	2183	91	0 81	
365	254	672	3148	146	0 11	
366	330	1027	4735	297	I 2	
367	488	1528	8107	576	I 3½	
368	645	2345	12284	908	I 4,	
369	762	3063	14326	944	I 3½	
370	850	3815	15842	1157	I 3½	3
371	1032	4776	20173	1647	I 4½	13
372	1278	6602	26220	1936	I 4	1
373	1439	7992	29594	2291	I 4	10
374	1675	9888	37349	2490	I 1½	I,
375	1714	9406	39060	2388	0 114	I
376	1726	9793	34456	2534	1 3	3
377	1806	10348	38727	2920	I 2	(
378	1824	11004	42365	3503	I 21	10
379	1935	13202	47344	4756	1 6	20
880	2072	15031	54220	4599	I 4	26
381	2504	18357	67471	5942	I 5	20
382	2968	22945	84217	7575	I 5	35
883	3544	30616	99745	9182	I 5½	42
384	3807	35227	100288	10418	I 5½	103
385	4016	40571	95146	11113	I 7	15
886	4448	45770	102000	11081	I 6	17:
887	4737	49904	114482	11097	I 5 5	18
888	5117	55022	126329	12732	I 7	220
389	5578	61584	134378	14568	I 7½	260
390	6123	67462	147557	15496		315
891	6738	77678	175662	10001	I 81	374
892	7615	85178	183203	19811	I 7 I 81 I 74 I 63	404
393	8125	89525	184343	19520	1 63	452
394	8275	93230	176380	19293	1 63	500
895	8485	98224	176615	20480	I 71	59
396	8753	104680	183722	20674		620
897	8878	105024	185271	19799	I 7 I 53	644
898	9100	110954	192643	20589	1 54	630
399	9520	120416	205401	23340	1 74	655
)00	9849	130122	226286	24854	I 74 I 63	70
001	10186	135478	230067	24685	1 54	728
002	10294	136383	230024	23154	1 34	752
903	10410	134233	234347	26529		640
904	10610	133273	239181	26796	I 5½ I 5¾	660
05	10858	137745	248555	25105	I 65	752
906	11277	146579	258303	26122	I 61	86
07	11458	153646	273802	26303	1 6	611
908	11507	162873	295804	28185	1 61	616
909	12082	176314	317282	33821		743
	12781	192209	344764	38001	I 75 I	900
910	12/01	192209	344/04	30001	1 /4	900

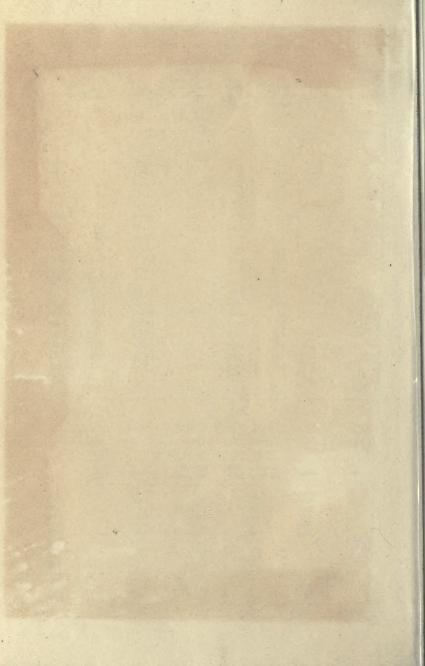
THE SOCIETY'S COUNTRY BRANCHES.

Name of Village.									
	Dist'nce from Lincoln (miles).	Date Establish'd	Present Number of Members.	Sales for Year ended 1910.	Net Profit, Year ended 1910.	Capital held by Local Members.	Present Value of Land and Buildings.	Advanced on Mort- gage to Members.	Amount Repaid up to Jan. 1st, 1911.
				72	7	¥	72	F	72
Welbourn	13	1878	533	12633	859	4380	2695	1503	1080
Metheringham	01	1881	389	13470	0101	2631	1732	360	347
Saxilby	9	1883	360	6864	212	2150	1518	720	531
Bardney	6	1886	343	10734	853	1909	3730	350	17
Horncastle	23	1887	440	10937	732	3803	3083	2469	715
Sleaford	18	1887	635	13402	029	4700	. 2225	0006	105
Market Rasen	15	2681	360	6054	348	2021	2855	0911	935
Bassingham	9	1892	205	5062	322	1095	856	:	:
Reepham	4	1893	232	1119	537	1340	2103	415	154
Hackthorn	7	1900	44	1415	125	485	Rented	500	35
-	:		3541	£89982	1 65973	£24514	£20797	£8377	61689

PROGRESS OF THE MILLING BUSINESS FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN 1886 TO DECEMBER, 1910.

Үезг.	Production.	Capital Originally Invested and Additions to same.	Depreciation and Interest.	Net Profit.
	f.	· f.	£	£
1886 (Half Year)	12087	11514	39	330
1887	29519	102	64	794
1888	30451	196	117	752
1889	29031	122	341	1296
1890	33170	271	310	1077
1891	46970	456	379	1179
1892	38185	1016	376	982
1893	34275	34	328	1229
1894	30085	2147	321	859
1895	31970	4890	383	1016
1896	34260	2187	414	971
1897	36961		316	891
1898	40717	•••	302	1057
1899			0	1181
	33259		320	
1900	37030		325	1331
1901	36075	***	317	1099
1902	37015		281	1053
1903*	44794	85	259	2405
1904	46022		394	2073
1905	43876	5681	1516	1065
1906	47008	4632	1313	2013
1907	54263	58	1332	3643
1908	56764	327	1773	1505
1909	62235	66	1750	2354
1910	63822	228	1771	3414
	£989844	£34012	€15041	£35569

^{*}At the commencement of 1903 the Bread Making and Confectionery Departments Accounts became embodied in the Mill Accounts.



TE POPROWER

Fitle History of co-operation in Lincoln.

Author McInnes, Duncan

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